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Margaret Rest  
From John Santillo  
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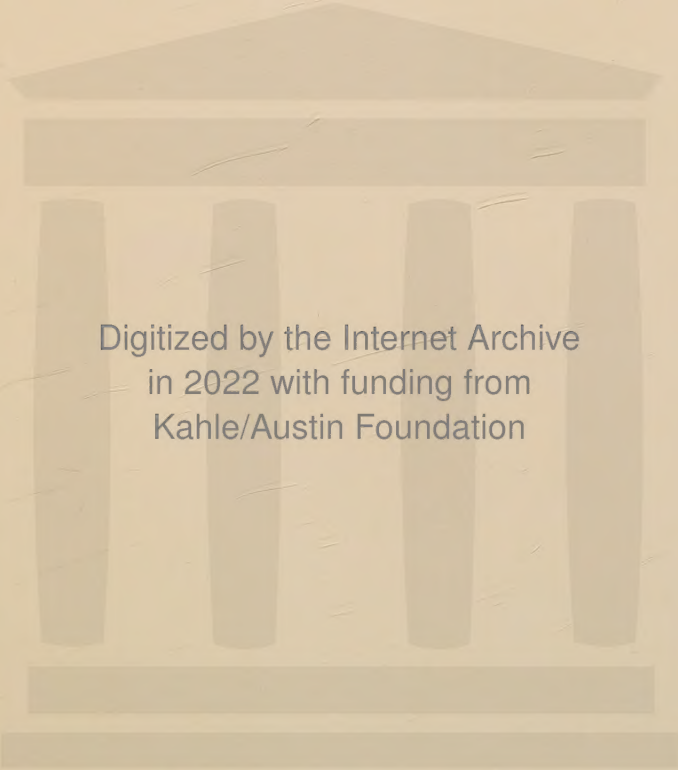




CHILDREN OF THE ALPS







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# CHILDREN OF THE ALPS

BY

JOHANNA SPYRI

(Author of "Heidi" & "Gritli's Children.")



Translated by  
HELEN B. DOLE

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# JÖRLI'S MANDOLIN

## I

### A DECISION IS MADE

**H**IGH above the little hamlet of Gsteig, on the narrow mountain path leading up to Schynig, stands a lonely hut. The joyous rushing of a clear mountain brook descending from the lofty summit, resounds continually around the hut. On the narrow wooden bench beside the door one bright summer evening old Lukas was sitting and watching the full moon as it rose behind the mountain and gradually poured its light over all the heights and depths. Lukas was the mountain guide known far and wide, who many years before had had to give up the big mountain ascents to the younger guides and only undertake the easier ones without carrying luggage.

“Come here, Jörli, I must have a talk with you,” Lukas now called to the boy who, on his

knees beside the brook, seemed to be performing some difficult task.

“Right away, right away, Grandfather,” he called back, and hitched to and fro on his knees, hastening his work. After a little while he rose and came running along. In spite of the cool evening air his cheeks glowed and his big eyes sparkled like blue flames in the moonlight.

“Grandfather, the wheel will not go; if I could see just once how it works in a mill,” said Jörli, brushing his bright hair away from his hot face.

“Come, sit down beside me; then you will soon cool off, come! I must have a talk with you,” replied his grandfather. Jörli sat down beside him. “See, Jörli, how beautiful the moon shines up there! It was shining exactly like that and looked down on us when I brought you here on my back eight years ago, because your father was dead. I look back with pleasure to that evening when you came in to live with me! Now I must tell you something, Jörli, something that I do not like to say to you, because it will pain me and you too. So let us first sing a song of praise together.”

“Can I bring out the mandolin, Grandfather?”

asked Jörli. "You know it sounds much finer when I play it too."

"Yes, bring it, and come right back," said the grandfather.

The boy obeyed; in a few moments he sat down again on the bench. The mandolin was an instrument quite unknown in this region; it must have come from some other country. The boy fingered the strings very skilfully, but a little capriciously. Then the grandfather began a song in his deep voice which was still very strong and Jörli joined in with clear bell-like tones and accompanied quite correctly on the strings of his mandolin.

The two sang:

My heart with joy is bounding;  
For tears it has no room;  
Songs on its strings are sounding,  
And sunbeams banish gloom.

"Why are we singing such a joyful song, Grandfather?" Jörli here interrupted the singing, "when you have to tell me something at once that will make us both feel badly?"

"For that very reason," replied the grandfather. "A song of praise and thanks brings

joy and trust again to the heart, when they might be lost. And you see to sing praise and thanks is good in every situation, and I can tell you something extraordinary about that, and it is a good thing for every one. Now let us go on singing."

This they did. But as soon as the song was ended, Jörli said quickly: "Grandfather, now tell me the extraordinary thing so that you know it is good to sing songs of praise and thanks in every case. I should so much like to hear about it."

"I wanted to talk about something different," replied the old man, "but if you want so much to hear about that I will tell you."

It seemed as if the old man himself was not unwilling to postpone telling what he really had in mind.

"It must be about nine years ago," he continued, "a year before I brought you home with me, when I was coming back from a mountain trip and was walking unconcerned across the Rhone glacier. I had made the way so many times before. But the day before fresh snow had fallen, when one always needs to be par-



ticularly careful. Crack—then I was lying down in a crevasse—so deep that I could not possibly get out by my own strength. What then? I gave one shout after another, trying to make myself heard. But what is such a shout which echoes back again immediately? I gave another and another—in vain, all in vain. Then I thought to myself: sing, that sounds loud and continuous and if any one comes near, and sees nothing alive he will look around to find where the singing comes from. So I began and what I was accustomed to sing came out. I sang therefore very loud:

“ Let all now thank the Lord  
With hearts and hands and voices!  
He mighty things hath done  
For which the earth rejoices.  
His blessings He hath poured  
On us since earliest days.  
His goodness hath no bounds;  
’Tis shown in endless ways!

“ With these words trust in God came to my heart so that I immediately sang the same thing from the beginning over again, even much louder than before. At first my voice was a little muf-

fled but now it sounded full of courage and trust. Then I heard voices above me, nearer and nearer, and then a rope came down and somebody called to me:

“ ‘Fasten the rope under your arms!’ I called up, ‘I know well enough how to do that, pull away!’ Only a few strong pulls and I was up. Then one of the two called to me—they were guides whom I knew well:

“ ‘Are you beside yourself from fear, Lukas, that you sing down there songs of praise and thanks, as if you were dying?’

“ ‘No,’ I said, ‘I am entirely in my right mind, and now I will sing again, and all my life long I will sing songs of praise and thanksgiving in every situation, for singing brought glad trustfulness to my heart, so that I could sing loud and strong and you heard me and rescued me.’ And then I began to sing once more and they sang with me, and now you can think how it pealed from my heart because I could walk away again under the blue sky on solid ground. And now the recollection of the great rescue restores my real trust in our Father in Heaven, so now I will tell you what you have to know.

“ You see, Jörli, when I brought you home with me I was still able to climb the mountains and earn my bit of money. Old Lena, who owns the little house, looked after you, to see that the brook did not carry you off, for you were always near it and wouldn't come away.”

“ I was making mill-wheels, but I cannot even now make them right,” Jörli interrupted the old man.

“ Very well, but listen to me now,” continued the grandfather. “ Then after a few years I could only take the small trails, the big ones were too tiring and for the last year I can no longer make my way. The little I had saved has come to an end; we have reached the time when I can earn nothing more. Meanwhile old Lena has been growing older, and to-day she told me she could no longer get along alone, and she intended to have her young cousin from Gsteig come up here with his wife, which they both would like to do. Then there will no longer be room for us in the house and we shall have to go away. You see, Jörli, if I still had my strength I should not have any anxiety, but who would give me work? I cannot promise now that I could do it right. I

had hoped I could help Lena here with her two goats and the little piece of land she has, and so we could remain with her until you would be able to help yourself. I shall surely not last much longer."

"Oh, I can really do that already! Look at me, Grandfather, I am almost as tall as you," said Jörli, stretching himself up as tall as possible. "I can already work for you and me too. Early to-morrow morning I will go and look for work, and until I have earned something and can bring it to you, old Lena must keep you here. I will pay her very soon. I will surely work so that I shall bring home something, that you will soon see, Grandfather!"

The boy's happy assurance lightened the grandfather's heart. "Well, that is right," he said, "only always be trustful, never lose your faith that the dear Lord will help when it is time, but don't forget to pray about it, do you hear, Jörli? You are no longer small, that is true, you will soon be twelve years old; you must have been about four when I brought you home with me. So start away; old Lena will surely keep me, and if you don't find work, come back



home, then I will go with you. If people see me creeping around as I have to do now, they will surely give you something to do, out of pity."

"Will you give me the mandolin to take with me?" asked Jörli urgently.

"It is yours. If you want to have it with you, take it," replied the grandfather. "Only you must think it will be a burden for you to carry it always with you. You might be sorry that you lugged it with you."

"Oh no, never. I know that decidedly!" asserted Jörli, "but if I didn't have it, I could hardly bear it, to be so far away from you and the mandolin."

"Well, take it along, take it along," replied the grandfather willingly. It occurred to him that it might be a comfort to the boy to have something from home with him in a strange place.

"It is really a remarkable instrument," added the grandfather, looking at the old mandolin, which Jörli had again taken in his hand, and now under his fingers gave forth soft melancholy tones.

"How you can bring such sounds from it, I

cannot understand," said the old man again, "it must have been born in you; I was not able to teach you. But when I sang to you, when you were still a little boy hardly six years old, you would seek the right tones on the instrument and sing and play besides, and could always play better from year to year, which was amazing to me."

"But the mandolin is very dear to me, Grandfather, after you, the dearest thing in the world," asserted Jörli.

Meanwhile the golden moon had travelled quite a distance up the sky. It must have been later than they were accustomed to go to bed.

Then the grandfather rose: "Come, Jörli, not to-morrow morning but the morning after you can start off. It will be empty up here when you are away."

"Then you must sing, Grandfather, and you will make yourself happy again," said Jörli, as he went into the hut behind the old man.

## II

## JÖRLI LOOKS FOR WORK

IT was a bright summer morning when Jörli, all ready for his journey, stood in front of the hut. An old leather knapsack, which the grandfather had carried with him on many mountain trips, hung on his back, and contained a change of clothing, a second shirt and a pair of stockings. The grandfather had brought home a good pair of shoes for him a short time before, really with the thought of the approaching journey. Jörli had them on his feet; the mandolin hung by his side.

“Well, go and be good. Your grandfather deserves it from you,” said old Lena, who had stepped out in front of the hut to bid him farewell.

“Good-bye, Jörli,” said his grandfather, holding the boy’s hand fast; “keep God before your eyes, and if you are in trouble sing a beautiful song, so that real trust will come back to your heart. Never lose your trust in God, but hold

fast to it with all your might, then all will go well."

Jörli clasped his grandfather's hand once more, then he started away. The grandfather must not see how he had to swallow to keep back the tears.

Jörli was soon far down the mountain, he went so quickly over the smooth pasture land to the valley. The sun was shining beautifully and the birds were singing merrily in the branches. Jörli's heart grew light again. It was still early in the day, for Jörli had started immediately after sunrise. Then he travelled along the main road leading from Gsteig to Interlaken. He had walked a good while when the big, high hotels in Interlaken came into sight. Crowds of well-dressed people were walking through the avenues of trees, others were sitting on the benches under the shady nut-trees. Jörli became happy and thought:

"Where there are so many people, there must be work enough, more than I can do."

He went in at once to the first hotel and asked the waiter who was carrying a big tray, piled high with dishes, along the corridor:



“Can I find work here? I could help you carry those.”

The waiter looked back. “Get away from here and don’t let yourself be seen here again. We don’t need any vagabonds!” he called threateningly, and his looks were even more threatening than his words. Jörli ran out in alarm. A few steps farther on came a much larger building with high windows. This was also a hotel. In the wide entrance stood a huge fat man with both hands in his pockets and with great calmness watched the frightened Jörli hurrying along. Jörli thought he was surely the landlord himself, and he would not be so cross. He stepped up to him.

“Can I have work here? I will surely do everything as it should be done,” he said encouraged by the steady calmness of the man he was addressing. He looked at the boy in silence up and down and again down and up. Then he shook his head. Finally he said:

“There is no work here for green boys and music players.” Jörli remained standing a little longer; the landlord had spoken so slowly, perhaps he had not quite finished, perhaps he was

going to say something more, but there was nothing more said. Then the man drew one hand very slowly out of his pocket, and pointed with his big thumb towards the street, which plainly meant: "Go along!" Jörli went.

At the next house there was a garden. Jörli had hardly entered this when a woman called warningly from the window:

"Nothing! Nothing! Don't play any music!"

"I was going to ask for work, not to play music," replied Jörli.

"There is no work for you here. Shut the garden gate!" Whereupon the woman closed the window.

Jörli's courage began to wane. If here where there must be so much to be done, he could find no work, where could it be found? he said to himself doubtfully. But there were a great many more houses, large and small; he would enquire farther, the very next house might be the right one. It was not so; he was driven away. Jörli went on farther. Through the entire long street, from house to house, he asked for work; everywhere he was sent off. Then he came away from houses out into the country.

He would now try the farmhouses; there in the middle of summer there must be enough to do. The old house with the big roof over there, standing in the middle of the meadow, looked so homelike he went to it. The farmer's wife was cooking on the broad hearth, the kitchen door stood wide open, and a very inviting odor of baking came out to him.

"Can you give me work?" asked Jörli into the kitchen. The woman held a pan in each hand and was running hurriedly to and fro. She cast a hasty glance at the questioner.

"Come in the autumn, when there are apples and pears to gather. There is nothing to do now for such as you are!" she said to him and went on hurriedly about her housework. Jörli breathed in the good odor and went away.

Since five o'clock that morning, when he had taken his little bowl of milk and potatoes, he had eaten nothing more and had been constantly on his feet, and now it was noon. He looked back once more. The farmer's wife had no time to think of anything else except that her men were waiting for their dinner. She did not see at all how the boy looked back.

He went on further. He would not beg. His grandfather had told him that was shameful for people who could work, and he could surely do that. Jörli wandered on again. Here and there some distance away from the road were small houses to be seen, but where there was little land there would be little work, he thought, and so went on farther, until he noticed a large farm, where two huge oxen were harnessed to an enormous hay-wagon.

"They are surely going to bring home the hay; there must be work there," Jörli said to himself and strode vigorously up to the house. He could plainly see that the strong man who was giving orders to the workmen was the farmer himself, and immediately turned to him.

"Can I help with the work? I am good at haying for I have always helped my grandfather when he spread the hay," said Jörli confidently.

"Quite right, quite right, we know that kind of work," replied the farmer and at the same time threw a scornful look at the mandolin. He went on talking with the men and showed plainly that he wanted to have nothing further to do with the boy. Very downcast Jörli went on along the



road. He asked again and again for work, but more and more faint-heartedly for he always received the same answer, and at the large farms where he had the greatest hope of success he was sent away with the shortest answer.

It was now near sunset; still he wandered on and on. Fatigue and hunger began to be very painful to Jörli and finally he felt he would be too tired to go any farther and would have to drop down by the wayside and die of hunger. At this prospect he became so frightened he couldn't go any farther and was obliged to sit down on the edge of the road. Then he thought of his grandfather, how he was sitting now on the bench beside the hut and surely thinking of him and wondering how well he was succeeding in his search for work. Then it occurred to Jörli that the moment had now really come when he ought to sing a song of praise and thanks, as the grandfather had explained to him that one ought to do. He would begin at once, but this was not so easy, as the grandfather had related to him. Jörli could not sing, the tones would not come out of his throat. Then he took up his mandolin; that must help him. Then he thought how many scornful

looks to-day had been given his beloved old mandolin and consolingly said: "You are still dear to me, even if they did scorn you and I will never leave you behind, if they drive me away everywhere on your account."

Then he struck the strings, but they had never sounded so sad before. He would now try to sing a song then perhaps they would sound more cheerful again, but suddenly he began to sob aloud so pitifully over the strings of his mandolin and all the recollections of his life with his grandfather which rose before him that he could not bring out another note of singing and he heard nothing but the sound of his own sobs. This was not at all as his grandfather had done and yet Jörli was not lying in a crevasse, but had the beautiful blue sky above his head and the firm ground beneath his feet. He would not be so ungrateful; he collected himself and began to sing loudly one of the songs of praise the grandfather had taught him and sang all the verses through. His mandolin sounded more and more lively and cheerful and with the last verse it sang the loudest with him:

I thank Thee for Thy grace to me,  
Thy help in every woe  
And that forsaken none need be  
That toward his God doth go.

When Jörli had sung the last words happiness had risen in his heart again. Now he suddenly knew where help would come from in his abandonment. Then he laid his mandolin aside, folded his hands, looked up to Heaven and prayed straight from his heart:

“Oh, dear Lord, I cry to Thee. Thou wilt surely not forsake me, when I am so alone.”

Then he rose quite courageously, hung his mandolin by his side and started confidently on his way farther. From time to time he looked trustfully towards the bright evening sky and sang loud and cheerily:

And that forsaken none need be  
That toward his God doth go.

## III

## A DOOR OPENS

NOT far from the place where Jörli had sat sobbing on the ground, a full mountain brook came roaring down from the heights to Lake Thun near by. Shaded by the thick foliage of old nut-trees, a mill with strong walls and high gabled roof stood beside the rushing stream. There the great wheel turned away incessantly and big sacks filled with corn were constantly brought in and then packed in new bags as fine white meal and at last, piled high one above another, lay heaped on the big wagon, which the four strong gray horses then pulled out to the yard. Where this went on a happy life ought to prevail in house and home, every one thought who came near the place, but it was not so at Stauffer's Mill. The miller went silently through his rooms, from the house into the courtyard, from the courtyard into his barn, from the barn into the mill. He spoke no word except to growl now and then at one of the boys: "Why so

slow!" or to an apprentice as he passed by: "Do better than that."

The miller understood his business remarkably well and attended to everything, but he never looked as if his beautiful property and the whole thriving establishment made him happy. He looked as if a hidden sorrow gnawed him. The miller's wife also was no longer the happy woman she had been years before, when the young people liked to gather at Stauffer's Mill better than anywhere else, because the miller's wife always had some new pleasure ready for them, and they enjoyed themselves in all respects more than anywhere else.

The only son of the house for whom his mother so gladly prepared these festivities was known as the happiest and the cleverest fellow of all in the whole region. They all thought no one else was so well suited to the beautiful Stauffer's Mill as he.

"You just ought to have seen how it was at the mill sixteen years ago, then there were quite different times with the festivals and gayeties," often said the old maid-servant to the young one, who had been recently engaged to help her. She



had just said this again, when the two had swept the courtyard clean with their brooms and were about to go into the house. At this moment the miller with bowed head and a gloomy face came across the courtyard.

“Yes, life was different then,” continued the maid, as he disappeared in the stable. “The young son was still here, a handsome fellow and so good and friendly; everybody liked him, and how fond the miller and his wife were of him—they were both quite different from what they are now! You ought to have seen how the miller’s wife could laugh with her boy and how proudly the miller looked at his son, when he jumped up on the loaded wagon and sat up there with a bearing and an assurance like no one else and then drove away with the four horses; it was a joy to watch him.”

“And then did he die?” asked the young girl.

“He went away from home to learn the mill business better and never came back,” related the other. “Naturally he is dead. They have never spoken a word about him; they could not on account of their pain and sorrow, neither the miller nor his wife.”

“I wonder,” said the young girl again, “why the miller’s wife goes every evening after sunset upstairs and looks out of the open window—just as if she saw something remarkable. Once I was standing below and saw her open the window and lean far out, but I could not see what she was looking for.”

Just then the maids heard the miller’s wife going up the stairs again. “Do you hear her?” asked the young maid quickly.

“What she is looking for I do not know. It doesn’t concern us at all. Go now and bring in the water, so that everything will be ready when she comes down,” replied the old servant and went quickly into the kitchen.

The miller’s wife could look from the window above far along the road, which stretched away like a white ribbon beside the dark edge of the woods. She leaned far out over the window-sill in order to see the road in both directions as far as possible. She looked for a good while towards the woods, then towards the lake. Then she stepped back and was going to close the window, but suddenly leaned out once more and gazed along the white road.

"No, it is nothing. He is too small, he doesn't come yet," she said to herself. She quickly wiped away a tear, then closed the window. What the miller's wife had seen and found too small, was Jörli, coming along the road there. Then he stood still and pricked up his ears.

"That is a mill," he said filled with delight. "If I could only take a good look at the wheel before it grows dark."

He turned aside from the road and ran to the mill. He did not need to go into the courtyard. Outside by the brook he could see so well how the fine big wheel with its powerful paddles lashed the waters of the brook. Jörli stood entirely absorbed in the sight. Since he had begun to think, it had been his highest wish to see a real mill-wheel turn, for his grandfather had told him how to make little wheels out of wood which the brook could turn and told him that was how mills were run, only with giant wheels. Now Jörli was looking with astonishment at the big wheel. If only he could dare to give a single look into the mill to see how the corn was ground inside, how it all went together and coöperated until the necessary machinery had made fine, white meal

out of the coarse kernels, this was now his only wish, which became so strong that he forgot everything else. The miller had seen the boy running along and thought he was a beggar. Now that he had disappeared behind the mill, he went towards him to see what the boy was doing back there. But Jörli was so deeply absorbed in watching the mill-wheel that he did not notice at all that some one was approaching him. This admiration pleased the miller.

"What are you thinking about here?" he suddenly asked the boy.

Jörli started. A little frightened he answered, "I should so much like to see how it works when the corn is turned into meal inside."

"Well, where do you belong?" asked the miller not unkindly, and went to the courtyard. Jörli followed him. He now recollected why he really was on the road. Inside the courtyard the miller stood still and looked at the boy searchingly.

"I should like to find work. Perhaps I could do something in the mill," said Jörli.

Then the miller's eyes fell on the mandolin. Suddenly he exclaimed in a very different tone:

“So, you are one of those? Get away from here and don't let yourself be seen by me any more!”

Jörli was so surprised and frightened at the angry tone, that he remained standing still.

“Did you understand me, or must I help you?” cried the miller in greatest anger. “Sultan, chase him away!”

The big dog, which had been growling for some time, sprang with a frightful barking at the boy. With one sharp cry, Jörli darted out of the courtyard. The miller's wife had just stepped out of the house, and when she understood her husband's angry words and heard the boy's scream she came hurrying along.

“You wouldn't want to sin against a child, Stauffer?” she said excitedly. “What has the boy done to you?”

“He belongs to the thrice cursed wandering musicians!” screamed the miller and hastened enraged towards the stable. His wife went out towards the road, to see if she could see the boy anywhere. There he was not far away ahead of her, and walking slowly and wearily. The fright added to weariness affected his feet. The



wife called to him kindly. Jörli stood still hesitating.

"Come here, come, you needn't be afraid. I will take you with me into the house!" she called to him. He turned slowly back. "Are you tired?" asked the miller's wife sympathetically. "Where did you come from?"

"From the mountain above Gsteig," he answered. "I came away from home at five o'clock this morning."

"But you haven't been walking ever since," said the miller's wife.

"Yes, really," asserted Jörli; "only once I sat down a little while by the road," he added, for it occurred to him how he had wept and then had sung.

"You stopped for your dinner, I suppose," said the miller's wife.

"No, I had nothing to eat," replied Jörli.

"What, nothing from morning until now? How can you still stand on your feet?" exclaimed the wife. "Come in quickly with me!"

They then went across the courtyard. Cross Sultan came leaping angrily along, but his mistress called to him imperiously:

“I tell you to stop! Keep still at once, Sultan!” Then the dog went into his kennel and made no more sound.

They went into the big living-room where it looked very comfortable. A long table was neatly laid for all the mill hands and at the head for the master and the mistress. But she led Jörli to a small table, sat down beside him and said kindly: “The others will not come yet, but you must eat right away.”

Then the maid brought in what the mistress had ordered and she filled a big plate full of the fine, thick milk porridge, and while he was enjoying this, she spread some lovely white bread with butter and laid a bright red slice of ham on it. Then she made a light, for it had grown dark.

“I must really see how you look,” she said and regarded him long and carefully. There must have been something about him that pleased her, for she kept looking at him again and again, but said nothing. But the eyes directed towards him were so friendly that he became quite at ease and enjoyed eating his good supper.

“You look as neat as if your mother had

---

dressed you this morning," the miller's wife began, "and yet you are one of those little wandering musicians, who go about on the mountains and play something to strangers and then can lie down in the straw and in the morning have to go on again."

"No, I am not that," said Jörli; "my grandfather is the mountain guide Fretz, and I have always lived with him. He said this morning I must put on my good clothes and pack the others in my knapsack, or else nobody would give me work."

"Where do you have to go? Where will you get work?" the miller's wife wanted to know further.

Then for the first time she heard that Jörli did not know where he was going, nor where he would find work, that he did not know any place where he could sleep that night. To the wife's question, "Why then had he had to go away from his grandfather so early?" he told her that he could no longer climb the mountains, that he had nothing left and old Lena was taking relatives into the hut so there was no longer room for him there.

“Why then do you carry this musical instrument around with you?” the miller’s wife wanted to know still further.

“Only because I am fond of it,” he explained to her, “and because I can sing the songs Grandfather taught me, better, when it accompanies me.”

“Is that so! What songs has your Grandfather taught you then?” enquired the miller’s wife.

Jörli had finished eating and was therefore in good spirits and so full of gratitude, that he immediately began to sing with great glee:

“My heart with joy is beating and cannot be cast down!” and his mandolin sounded more cheerful than for a long time.

“Your grandfather taught you to sing good songs,” said the miller’s wife, who had listened from verse to verse of the pleasing song with increasing delight. “You have a voice I like to hear. You must sing again to me. But come, give me the mandolin, I must put it up there.” She quickly seized the instrument and put it way up in a cupboard. She had heard the miller coming.

“Shall I never have it again?” asked Jörli with a sad look towards the cupboard.

“Surely, but not right away. I am friendly to you,” said the wife quickly.

Jörli felt this was so and was at once cheered again. Then the miller came in. His eyes flashed as he looked at the boy, then at his wife.

“You were mistaken, Stauffer,” she said quietly, “the boy is no wandering music player. His grandfather is a mountain guide in Oberland. He is looking for work, and has no place to spend the night, so he must stay with us. We have never sent good people away and the boy and his grandfather are of that kind.”

The miller said nothing. He looked on in silence, as his wife took the boy by the hand and led him out. Upstairs in the house was a roomy chamber, with a fine bed in it.

“There now, sleep well,” said the wife kindly. “What is your name?—Jörli? Sleep well; to-morrow we will see where you can go.” She gave the boy her hand and at the same time looked into his eyes so kindly that he felt as if he were at home.

When the miller's wife came down again it was



time for supper. After this when the people had all gone out again she sat down beside her husband at the small table, as was the custom every evening. She laid down his pipe and tobacco for him, brought him a separate glass and when everything was pleasantly arranged she said:

“ Now let us talk about the boy. Did you see what a good, clean face he has—and how he looks like—so much like—I cannot say how.”

“ Why does he carry around that instrument with him? ” asked the miller in a sharp tone.

“ But, Stauffer, weren't you a boy too once? Don't you know what they all do? ” replied his wife. “ Every one likes to carry about something with him, one an old pistol, another a knife, and the third bullets, which tear out all their pockets. Every one has something that he doesn't want to give up if it is only a piece of shoemaker's rosin, with which he glues everything. Just recollect, isn't it so? ”

The miller nodded; the description fitted the recollections of his youth.

“ You see it is so,” continued his wife. “ This boy has now a fondness for the old instrument and when he had to go away from home he did

not want to leave it behind, that is all. It is really hard enough and a pity that so young a boy has to go among strangers and earn his bread and perhaps be kicked about. And—to be brief, Stauffer, I will out with it that I should like to keep the boy here. There are all kinds of work here in the house and yard, and if he proves as good as he looks you would soon enough want to have him in the mill.”

“So you would immediately take in a vagabond boy you don’t know a thing about, that is a fine plan!” replied the miller, but his tone in speaking was no longer angry; now he knew that he did not have to deal with a roving musician he recalled how absorbed the boy had stood in front of the mill-wheel—that had softened the miller’s opinion. His wife noticed his altered tone in a moment and knew that she had won out without further struggle. This delighted her so much that something of her old happy spirits appeared and she had so much to tell her husband this evening about the past and present that the old clock on the wall struck ten before he was aware of it and he rose full of surprise.

“For many years I have never thought it was

nine o'clock when it struck ten," he said and the miller's wife thought as she was going to sleep:

"I should like to hear such a song as Jörli sung, every evening." How long it had been since she had heard any songs sung, much less sung one herself.

## IV

### AT STAUFFER'S MILL

JÖRLI rose early as had been his custom on the mountain. Now he was standing in the courtyard ready to journey on and was waiting for the master's wife, so that he could thank her and take back his mandolin. The miller then came out of the house. He was pleased that the boy was already out so early. Not unkindly he replied to his morning greeting.

"Go inside," he then added, "my wife is getting some breakfast for you."

Jörli obeyed. The door was standing open. Inside in the living-room the miller's wife was arranging the table. She heard the boy's steps.

“Come in,” she said in a friendly way. “See, you will sit here now next to me at the table, for you are going to stay with us, Jörli; we have work for you already and I think you will make good.”

Jörli did not know what to make of it. That he was already going to live at a mill, where he could see the entire working of the machinery was a fortunate prospect, and besides to stay with the kind lady was a still greater good-fortune. He could not say a word, but his eyes beamed so with delight that the miller's wife said smiling: “Are you glad? That is right, and I am delighted too.”

At breakfast-time when all her people were gathered the lady told them that Jörli now belonged to the house and was everywhere to be included. After the meal she took Jörli by the hand.

“Come with me,” she said and led him out into the courtyard, in front of the kennel where big Sultan was stretched out sunning himself. He sprang up and growled angrily.

“Come here, Sultan,” said his mistress and pointed to Jörli by her side. “Look at him, he

belongs to me, come and lick his hand!" Then she stroked Jörli's hand quite slowly and kindly. Sultan looked on attentively for a while, then he became quite tame and licked Jörli's hand.

"You good Sultan, you," said Jörli, and laid his hand on his head, "now we are going to be good friends, aren't we?" The dog wagged his tail and licked Jörli's hand several times again.

"He understands, and now he will be friendly, you can be sure," said the miller's wife, stroking Sultan to reward him and then went on with Jörli, for he had to become acquainted with all parts of the estate. Then she went with him into the cellar and afterwards all over the house, so that he would know every room and its use, for she had it in mind to install him as her own personal servant and companion. Jörli had open eyes, and paid strict attention to everything the miller's wife showed him. After the inspection of all the living rooms, the use of which she explained, she led him up to the garret, quickly opened the window and looked up and down the road—she said nothing more. Then Jörli thought he must do the same and looked out too. "Oh, the window is going to fall!" he cried,



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and held it fast with all his strength. The lady immediately seized it too; she saw a great danger.

“Run, run, Jörli, as fast as you can and bring a man, a strong one. The window is frightfully heavy; if it falls down it might kill somebody.”

Jörli darted down the stairs. “This is what happens when one’s thoughts are elsewhere,” said the miller’s wife to herself. “Every day I have opened the window and not noticed anything amiss.”

Quicker than she thought, help was there. It was well, for strong as the miller’s wife was, she could not have held the huge oak window much longer. Jörli with his keen eyes went directly to the head carpenter who was working down in the mill. So the matter was immediately put in order. The miller’s wife was so full of the discovery of a threatening misfortune and the speedy assistance, that she had to find the miller and tell him what a help in the house she had found the boy to be, and in her delight she had so much to relate about the boy’s keenness, his cleverness and thinking out things that the miller finally said drily: “Take care that in a week

you don't have to take back too much of your song of praise. This is the first day the boy has been here."

But this made no impression on his wife, whose good opinion of him and the affection she already felt for him nobody would be able to tear from her heart. In her delight she had to tell the maids too, what a prize for the house this boy's arrival was; how Jörli accomplished exactly what he had to do, and how he saw what was needed to be done everywhere; this was because his thoughts were always on what he was doing and not on a hundred other things. The maids did not like to hear this praise, for they thought everything had been in order in the house before such a ragamuffin of a boy had appeared. And that he had caused their mistress's remark to them about concentration of thought made them very angry. They would make him suffer for it.

Jörli improved from day to day. He had become familiar now with the whole routine of the household, knew how everything had to be, how one duty followed another, and where each thing had its place. He was soon the lady's right hand. She trusted the boy as she would herself, and her

affection increased every day so that she could hardly talk with her husband about anything else except her boy. The miller listened in silence, and only occasionally replied drily: "He hasn't been here a week yet."

When this length of time had passed and even more the miller met Jörli early one morning as he came running busily from the back yard where the hens and ducks had their quarters.

"Twenty little chickens hatched out of the eggs in the night," called Jörli triumphantly. The care of the hens and ducks had been entirely given over to him by the miller's wife.

"It seems that your family make you happy," said the miller. "But don't you wonder what goes on in the mill? Would you like to come in there with me?"

Jörli's face lighted up with joy. For a long time he had been wishing for this, but the big mill hands were not very friendly to him, and he was still a little timid with the master, and on that account had never ventured to go nearer than the open door of the mill to peep in.

"Well, come," said the miller, who understood his silent answer.

Jörli hesitated for a moment, then said a little shyly:

“May I come when I have first told the mistress about the good fortune?”

“Very well, run, it seems the family comes first,” said the miller, and this time a gentle smile passed over his face, which Jörli had never seen before. He ran as quickly as he could to carry his good news to the miller’s wife and came bounding back to the mill. Meanwhile the men had come to work, and everything was in the greatest activity.

The miller led Jörli to all the places where there was anything to be seen, and answered as he went all the boy’s questions, who observed with the greatest attention every hopper and every leather belt. At every new object he tried to find out why it was there and how everything worked together. Where tall Kaspar was standing, one of the mill boys who was called so on account of his unusual growth, a strangely constructed machine was in operation, Jörli gazed and wondered and knelt down, in order to observe from all sides the bolting of the different kinds of meal which resulted. The miller went away for

a moment and left the boy to his observations. When he returned, Jörli said, still standing in wonderment:

“If this belt was drawn tight behind it would go round much faster; it is exactly as if everything moved and then stood still for a moment.”

The miller came up and looked at the matter.

“Why have you eyes in your head if you don’t use them?” the miller asked tall Kaspar. “You ought to be ashamed of yourself before this boy who has only just come here and sees right away what the matter is, and you let it go when it is all wrong, and you have been working for three years now in the same place.”

The master then put the affair in order himself, and then went on further with Jörli. Tall Kaspar cast a very angry look at the boy.

When the whole interior of the mill had been inspected the master went out again with the boy and showed him how the wheel worked and for this Jörli showed an unusual enthusiasm. How many, many long hours he had thought over the construction of such a machine, as he sat up there entire days by his brook.

“Now you have seen everything, I will give



you some work to do in the mill. I will see what you can do with that," said the miller.

They went inside again and Jörli was soon absorbed in the work appointed to him.

A week had quickly passed since then. The miller's wife had understood very well why Jörli was so often away from her for every time she called him, it seemed he was over with the master and had work to do in the mill. The boy was missing wherever she went or stood and every hour in the day. But she knew where he was and was much delighted that her husband now would be sure to realize what Jörli was and how much they had in him. So a whole week had passed in this way. Her husband had never said a word about the boy and although the miller's wife wondered very much how Jörli was getting along with the work, she asked no questions for she would only have received the answer that a week had not as yet passed and before the end of that time her husband would not express an opinion.

Finally Saturday evening came. The miller's wife had hardly sat down beside her husband at the small table when she hastened to ask:

“And now how is Jörli getting along? It seems to me that he has been with you most of the time all the week.”

“That boy is a wonder, I tell you!” exclaimed the miller, who had only been waiting for the question. “I never came in contact with anybody like him before! He has eyes like a hawk. If anything is wrong he sees it at the first glance, but the way he knows at once how to remedy it, this has never happened to me before with one who has never had any training in the work. It is exactly as if the boy had come into the world with the stamp: ‘Miller’ in his brains. And he is a poor, vagabond boy, a stranger to me—oh!” —The miller gave a deep groan. “I have only known one who had such eyes like an eagle’s and a cleverness, and such a hand. Yes, whatever he touched with his fingers came out accurately and fine! He could do anything he wanted to. But what did he want to do!” The miller groaned still louder and was out of sorts.

“Stauffer,” his wife now interrupted her husband, who had become so excited and had talked on without taking breath, as he had not done for many years—“let us leave the past alone.

Let us now only be glad that the poor boy came straight to us. We can make good use of him and both be fond of him. Let us share him; you take him one day in the mill and I will take him one for myself in the house. So we shall both be happy and he will learn everything."

"What do you mean?" said her husband more excitedly than he was accustomed to speak. "He has nothing more to learn in the house. What he could learn, he grasped better in eight days than the two maids in eight years. Back in the hen and duck house it looks neater and more orderly than ever before since the place existed. I have seen this myself, and the boy knows better than the whole crowd that one needs to be up with the sun in the early morning. Every morning he is the first on the spot. I will make a miller out of him, such as I never had before. Who knows but I will let him study mechanics. I am thinking of enlarging the business in every way. He must be there every day and work into it."

His wife did not care to argue further about the boy. She was well satisfied that he had won her husband's heart, as no one had done since

their lost son, who had been his pride. She also hoped to find some way to have the boy in her hands again, for she had no intention of giving him up so entirely. In the first place she would content herself with Jörli's companionship every evening, when she sat on the bench with him in front of the house and he had to sing his songs to her. This had become the happiest hour of her day. But she did not let Jörli sing until the miller had gone into the house for she knew well that he could not bear music.

## V

### CLOUDS IN THE SKY

JÖRLI realized fully that the miller became more friendly to him every day and entrusted more and more work to him. More and more often when something was out of order, which came under the direction of one of the older men, Jörli was called by the miller and asked his opinion about the best way to remedy it. This confidence and friendliness from the master delighted Jörli so much, gave him such a heart for

his work and was such a spur to learn and accomplish everything exactly as the miller wanted it, that in a short time he had acquired a better knowledge in small matters as well as large than many of the mill boys in years.

The miller made no secret of it that he could rely on the boy better than on the grown men who had been familiar with the work for a longer time or professed to be. This vexed them very much and they all felt such anger towards Jörli that none of them would any longer speak a word with him and all looked on him as an enemy as soon as he entered the mill. This went to the boy's heart. Many times he suppressed a tear, when he had ventured to speak a friendly word to one of the men and he had turned his back with a scornful look, or given him back an insulting answer. Tall Kaspar treated him the most hostilely, for he still had an especial grudge against him. If Jörli passed him he would say in a scornful voice: "Tramp, vagabond!" This was the bitterest thing he could hear. He really had no home, he was only a wanderer and perhaps would have to roam about again like the homeless if he had to leave the mill. Was he



therefore a tramp and a vagabond? This sounded as frightful in his ears as if it were something shameful and gave him a stab in his heart every time.

Then the young maid in the kitchen began to talk like tall Kaspar. Every time she came near him she would say full of scorn: "Tramp, vagabond!" Then the maids sided with the millhands and the young one had exactly as much scorn for him as tall Kaspar. She had not forgotten how her mistress had reproved her on his account. The old maid-servant never said anything, but she threw wicked looks at him as soon as he came in sight. She also could not bear to have a stray boy come to such favor with her master's people.

She had just slammed the kitchen-door behind him. He had happily brought in a basket full of beautiful fresh eggs from his yard, but the mistress was not there as he had hoped. No one shared his delight over the fine eggs, and the maid showed him her hatred more than ever. He went slowly out through the passage. Perhaps the miller's wife would yet come along and he could show her the eggs. Then the young maid-

servant came hurrying along, ran up to him and said sharply:

“Get out of the way, you tramp!”

Jörli went out to the mill. Tall Kaspar was just coming out. He pushed the boy aside.

“Go, show the master again that there’s only one who can do anything, only the tramp, the vagabond!”

Kaspar had spoken the words softly, for the master was standing inside, but his scorn sounded loud enough in Jörli’s ears. He ran away; he ran across the courtyard to the back where the duck-pond and his hens were. Here he sat down on a stone by the pond and gave free vent to his tears. He had then wanted to go to his mistress and complain to her about everything and she would have surely protected him. But then they would all have been more antagonistic to him than ever and he could not bear that. He had always hoped that if he said nothing and remained perfectly friendly, the others would gradually become so, but they grew more and more scornful and disdainful. He knew the reason very well; they all had a family and a home. They knew where they belonged and he—yes,

he! Jörli had to wipe away his tears again. Even his hens there had a house, where they belonged, nobody could call them tramps and vagabonds; just he alone, only he belonged nowhere.

Then suddenly he thought of his grandfather. As long as everything had gone well with Jörli his grandfather had passed somewhat out of his mind. Now he suddenly saw him so plainly before him, as if he were going to speak to him.

“ Oh, Grandfather, you don't know where you are going either!” he cried sobbing, for it suddenly became very plain to him that his grandfather had to go away from the little house on the mountain, and perhaps was already wandering about as he himself had done on that day, when he had started out after work. And the old grandfather could no longer work: where would he go?

“ Oh, Grandfather, I am coming now and will help you!” cried Jörli still more troubled. Then he jumped up and ran to the house.

“ Where is the mistress?” he called to the old maid-servant, who was coming out.

“ Where is the fire?” she replied drily to the excited boy, and went along.

He ran into the house; the living-room door was standing open. The miller's wife was sitting here comfortably in the sunny living-room and cutting her fine red apples for a cake. The gray cat purred so contentedly at her feet, as if there was nothing in the world but sunny rooms in homelike millers' houses. Jörli looked at the cat, as if he wanted to say:

"You are very well off in your beautiful living-room, where you are at home."

"Well, Jörli, what good news are you bringing? Come take an apple," said the miller's wife, handing him, with the greatest friendliness, the handsomest of the apples. Jörli took the apple thanking her, but did not bite into it.

"I really must go back to my grandfather at once. I will go up to him to-day, if I can run right off."

Jörli spoke his words more quickly and excitedly than he had ever done before. The miller's wife laid aside her knife. She looked in the greatest astonishment at the boy.

"Jörli, what is the matter with you, what has happened?" she finally asked. "Have you heard anything from your grandfather?"

“No, but I know that he has to go away or has already gone, and he doesn't really know where to go. I must truly go, I must help him!” said Jörli in tones of the greatest anguish.

“Jörli, you are right to want to do something for your grandfather, but not in this way,” said the miller's wife decidedly. “Stay quietly where you are. I will find out where your grandfather has gone and then we can send him something from time to time and later you can visit him, but now you have hardly been six weeks away from him. To change so quickly is not a good thing.”

Jörli looked more and more distressed. “I must go, I really must go,” he repeated mournfully. “Perhaps Grandfather has already started, and is sent away everywhere. He can no longer work and will have to go on farther and farther and people will call him a tramp and vagabond, and he is not to blame.”

Then the tears ran more and more copiously down Jörli's cheeks and choked his voice. The miller's wife had never seen the boy like this before. He trembled as if he could hardly bear



to wait any longer and yet would have to obey. She felt pity for him.

“Jörli, see, I will do what I can so that you can go early to-morrow morning,” she said with great friendliness, “but to-day you mustn’t go. I must first talk with the master. He would not be at all pleased to have you run away from him so. But I will speak for you, so that you may go soon. Only dry your tears. You shall take a good sum of money to your grandfather, so that he can find a place to live, and then you can come back again. We will not desert your grandfather for he has cared for you and very well.” Jörli said nothing more and went away.

That evening, when the miller’s wife was again sitting alone with her husband, she told him Jörli’s plan. The miller fired up.

“What? Has he begun already?” he screamed to his wife. “Haven’t I already told you so? He is exactly like the other one, who looked more sharply into every corner than I do myself. He is going to be just as restless as the other. No, no, not a word. He stays here! What? You want to help him? It’s of no use, he can’t go away! Send the old man money; let

him be happy, so that the boy can stay here and work for him. He shall have what is right!"

But the miller's wife had to talk against her own heart's desire, for she saw constantly before her the beseeching eyes which Jörli had raised to her, and sympathized with his deep agitation. She must help him. She said he was really not their own boy, they had no right to keep him when he wanted to see his grandfather. Homesickness had overcome him, and he would surely come back; his grandfather himself would send him. They must let him go for it would be wrong to compel him to stay. Thus his wife talked on for a long time and became more and more emphatic and the thought of Jörli's confidence in her intercession for him made her more sympathetic and insistent. The miller said nothing more but blew thicker and thicker clouds from his pipe. Finally he rose. "Well, let him go, if you will have it so! He will never come back."

Whereupon the miller left the room. His last words brought a sad memory back to his wife's heart. Once before her husband had spoken the same words. She laid her head in her arms and wept in bitter sorrow.

## VI

## JÖRLI MAKES TWO JOURNEYS

No one who saw the miller's wife the following morning hustling about so fresh and vigorous, would have thought that she was the same one who had wept so bitterly the night before. She had just packed Jörli's knapsack and finally laid in two ham sandwiches and six hard-boiled eggs, for she thought the traveller would often be hungry before evening.

"Now, God bless you, Jörli," she said holding out her hand. "Come back again soon to us! Tell your grandfather every month you will earn a sum of money for him here, such as the master has given you now, so the grandfather will think it right to let you come away again."

Jörli held the mistress's hand more and more tightly, although he had said "good-bye" to her, and then pressed her hand once more and added:

"I thank you many hundred times for all the kindness you have shown me."

It seemed as if there was something more on his mind. "What is it, Jörli? Do you want some-

thing more? Only tell me what it is!" said the miller's wife kindly encouraging him.

"May I not have the mandolin again?" he asked a little timidly.

"Oh, I had forgotten all about it!" said the mistress, "but it will be all right up in the cupboard until you come back."

Jörli then drew his hand away and was about to go, but big tears were standing in his eyes.

"No, no, if you think so much of it, you must have it," said the miller's wife, quickly opening the cupboard, "and do you know, Jörli, when you come back, leave it with your grandfather. The master doesn't like to see it."

Meanwhile she had brought out the old mandolin and loosened the strap to hang it on Jörli's shoulder.

"God in Heaven, that is his mandolin!" she suddenly cried so heartrendingly that Jörli stared at her in the greatest alarm. "There is his name, as he scratched it himself. I watched him do it. Where did the mandolin come from, Jörli?"

"I really don't know," he replied still more frightened. "I got it from Grandfather, and my father had it before."

“Where did your father live? Was he with your grandfather? Perhaps you don't know anything about it, but your grandfather must know.”

Jörli wanted to say something about what he knew, but it had been so long since his grandfather had told him about his father, and the miller's wife was so much more excited than he had ever seen her, she did not let him collect his words. Then she ran out. Jörli took his mandolin. What had the mistress read there that he had never seen?—To be sure, there stood a name in the corner quite finely cut in. Jörli tried to decipher it; finally he succeeded. There it was: “Melchior Stauffer, Stauffer's Mill, Lake Thun.” So the mandolin had belonged to the miller himself! That was his own name. Jörli knew it very well, for it stood on all the sacks in big black letters. Perhaps it had been stolen from him, therefore he couldn't bear to look at one. He thought it would surely be taken by the master and never given back again. Full of distress he listened for the miller to come in with his wife.

Outside the miller's wife had called her husband twice impatiently, for she did not want to



talk with him before all the men in the mill. Finally he came out.

“Have the horse harnessed at once, Stauffer, I must go away,” his wife called to him. “I have a clue to him, the first in fourteen years. It is his old mandolin which the boy brought. I saw his name on it, which he scratched there before my eyes. The old man must know where the instrument came from. I am going to him, right away to-day; he can help me to trace him.”

The miller shook his head.

“It won't be of any use,” he said drily and was about to turn round again, but his wife held him fast.

“I tell you, Stauffer, if you do not have the horse harnessed I will go on foot up to the old man; nothing shall keep me from it.”

His wife in her excitement had spoken so decidedly that the miller knew what he had to do. He shrugged his shoulders indulgently and called across to the stable: “Harness the bay!” In a short time his wife was ready. She brought out Jörli who was still anxiously waiting, told him to get into the wagon, seated herself beside him and then they started off. Jörli did not know what

was going to happen and what all this meant. The miller's wife was so busy with her own thoughts she did not speak a word. She had taken the mandolin away from Jörli as soon as they had climbed in. "You might hit it while driving," she had said and placed it on her lap. She held it there very carefully, looking from time to time at the name scratched on it. Then Jörli saw her quickly wipe away a tear, which he had never seen her do before; it made him feel quite distressed. After a long time the miller's wife turned to the boy and said in her old friendly tone:

"To be sure, Jörli, you don't know where we are going. I am going with you to your grandfather. You must really be hungry."

Then she brought out the ham sandwiches and the eggs and what else she had placed in the basket at their feet.

"Now, Jörli, take what you like so you will be satisfied," she added encouragingly.

Then Jörli began to feel quite at his ease. To sit so comfortably in a wagon and be driven by the gaily trotting bay horse through the country was something he had never experienced before,

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and although his mistress was often silent for a long time, yet every word she occasionally spoke was very friendly, so he had no more distressing thoughts about the unexpected escort. Here and there he recognized the places where he had sat down hungry by the road on his journey there, or where he had been sent away or where, tired and sad, he had wandered along and had lost all courage. If only his grandfather had not already been obliged to wander far around on such a forsaken way! This thought disturbed Jörli again and he was glad to be getting on so fast.

Now the hotel in Gsteig was reached. The miller's wife jumped out. "You can unharness," she ordered the man, "then wait here. Towards evening we shall return." Then she went immediately up the mountain path. "Is it far up there?" she asked Jörli who was following.

"About an hour's climb, or a little more," he said, but he was not sure about it himself. Silently the miller's wife climbed on and on. They had gone on longer than Jörli had thought when he suddenly exclaimed: "There, there!" Then a clear brook came foaming down; this was his brook and above there stood the hut. Then Jörli

began to run. The grandfather was coming out of the house; he must have seen the boy.

“Jörli, Jörli, have you come back again! It is like a miracle!” said the old man, pressing the boy’s hand. “It seemed to me as if I must see you again. To-morrow I have to go away, where I do not know. To-day I have had to sing bravely, to keep my faith steadfast. And now you have come exactly like a song of consolation at the end. Who is the lady with you?”

The miller’s wife had reached there and held out her hand to the old man. “You are surely Jörli’s grandfather. I am delighted to see you. Your boy has been with us all the time, and has become dear to us. But he wanted to come back to you and I have come with him for I have something to talk with you about.”

The old man then wanted to take the lady into the living-room; the owner of the house, Lena, was inside, but the miller’s wife sat down on the wooden bench by the house and said she preferred to stay outside, as she wanted to talk with him alone. She had taken the mandolin away from Jörli, who had carried it up the mountain, and was now holding it firmly in her lap.

“Tell me now first of all,” the miller’s wife continued, “how did you, or how did Jörli’s father come by this mandolin?”

The old man looked at her thoughtfully then replied:

“I haven’t a word to say about it.”

“Then I must try further,” said the lady decidedly. “Where did your son die? Where had he lived?”

“Yes, that is a different matter; I really never had a son,” answered the old man slowly.

“Well, was it a son-in-law who had the mandolin, when it belonged to Jörli’s father, as he has told me—where did he live? Where can I look for him?”

“No, no, I never had a son-in-law,” said the man calmly.

The miller’s wife looked at him expectantly, but no further explanation was forthcoming.

“I do not wish to interfere in your affairs,” then said the miller’s wife a little impatiently, “but there is a name on this mandolin, which is very dear to me, and I shall not rest until I know how this instrument came into your hands, so that I can enquire further about it.”



“Tell her just what you know, Grandfather. You really ought to know how kind she has always been to me,” whispered Jörli to the old man. But he looked as if he heard nothing. He stared at the mandolin as if he saw the greatest wonder in the world before him. It seemed as if his thoughts turned back to the remote past, as he finally said:

“Is it so that the name is written on the instrument? Who would have thought it possible? And we looked in all his pockets, and searched every article of clothing, but there was nothing but initials sewed in. Yes, how much trouble the monks took! But there was nothing to be found. Do you know the name? Is the name well known to you?”

The miller's wife nodded. “Go on, go on! What more do you know?” she asked urgently.

“Yes, lady, if it is so, then I must tell you everything as it was,” said the old man. “Jörli too shall hear how it is with him, for he knows nothing about it. It was eight years ago, but it was early in the year, for the high mountain passes were still full of snow. I had led two gentlemen over the big Bernhard to Aosta, and the next day

started on the way back over the mountain. It was rough weather and the sky was dark gray. I said to myself: 'Run, so that you will reach the summit before it breaks.' So I ran and about an hour after, half-way from the top I came across a man, carrying a little child on his back and panting hard. I said: 'My good friend, it is not easy for you, put the boy on my back a little while; a storm is coming, we must hurry.' He replied he had been anxiously watching it for a long time, and was grateful to have me carry the boy. It grew blacker and blacker, and soon thick flakes were coming down. I said: 'Courage! Courage!' for I saw that the young man could hardly follow me. He was really still young, but he was sick, I could see that. Finally I pulled him along with all my strength for the storm was wicked. We came up to the top and the good monks in the hospice took us right into the warm room to the bright open fireplace and that did us good. But the little boy was half frozen and the father so exhausted that the monks put them both in a warm bed and did everything for them. And one of the kind-hearted monks stayed the whole night by the bed and gave the sick man

some stimulant from time to time. In the night he wanted to talk, for he hadn't spoken a word. The monk could hardly understand him, but he made out that the traveller was going home to his parents, and wanted to take the little boy to them. He begged him to inform them and tried to tell his name, but could not speak any more, only point to his belongings, then he fell back and was dead. The monks said that he had heart-failure. The following morning the little boy, well and with rosy cheeks, was lying beside his dead father.

“We looked through everything for a name, but found none, only initials on one thing. The monks thought a pocket-book or a paper would come to light somewhere, but they searched in vain.

“Then the good old prior came out to me and said I must take the little boy down in the valley for he could not stay up there. I must give him to some sympathetic family down there. Then he gave me a piece of money for the boy's board. They would lay out the dead man up there and would record the place where he lay so that when his people missed him they would come and they

would bring word to me so that I could tell them where to find the little boy. So I took him again on my back and went down towards the valley with him. The little boy babbled so prettily and told me his name was Jörli, but he didn't know any other name. From time to time he asked longingly: 'Where is Father?' and I said: 'He will come soon,' to pacify him. But the water came into my eyes and a great pity for the poor little orphan came over me. I grew so fond of him that I said to myself: 'Don't give away the little boy; keep him with you until his relatives come.'

"No word ever came from the hospice and when I was up there two years later, I heard that not a soul had enquired for the unknown man, who had died, and the prior was glad that I had kept the boy. The traveller had carried the mandolin with his knapsack on his back and it now belongs to the boy. I took it with him. But who could have thought that the name was on the mandolin!"

Hot tears had been rolling down the cheeks of the miller's wife for a long time.

"Jörli, Jörli, come here to me," she called with

great emotion. "Come, I am your grandmother. You belong to us! Now I know why so often when Jörli looked at me that he touched the depths of my heart. Yes, Jörli, I know you well. You look like my Melchior, Jörli; your father was our son, he was our Melchior, he was my Melchior!"

The woman was so deeply moved that even the old man had to wipe his eyes because of it. Jörli stood there in speechless astonishment. But he leaned very trustfully against the affectionate grandmother and looked more and more contented. When the miller's wife had composed herself a little she turned again to the guide.

"We owe you great gratitude," she said offering him her hand. "God willing, we shall be able to pay something of our indebtedness. But now tell me if you know anything more about my son, even if only a single word."

The old man reflected. On account of the storm and his companion's weariness speech was out of the question. But one thing came to his mind. When he took the little boy on his back, he asked his father: "Where is Mother?" Then his companion pointed back towards Italy and



said: "Dead and buried down in her home-land."  
"Now I know something more," the man added;  
"upstairs there is a scarf which Jörli didn't care  
to take with him. It was always too warm for  
him, but it is still handsome, so I said we must  
take good care of it."

The old man went in and brought out a gray  
scarf with red stripes. The miller's wife knew  
it well. It was the one she had knitted for her  
son the last Christmas he had spent at home. She  
saw him before her as gaily laughing he had  
swung the scarf around. Her tears fell on it.  
She could not speak.

"He hadn't forgotten his mother to keep her  
work so carefully," said the old man sym-  
pathetically.

"Now you must hear something more about  
Jörli's father," said the miller's wife after some  
time. "You surely must wonder how all this  
happened, and you deserve to have me tell you.  
Our Melchior was a wide-awake youth, clever  
and skilful about everything. The boy was my  
husband's pride. He was to become the most  
renowned miller in the country far and wide.  
So we were adding a new building to the mill,

and among the masons was an Italian who sang like a bird and had brought this mandolin with him. Our Melchior was about seventeen years old at that time. He was always with the Italian—Marlo his name was—and the two sang and played together so beautifully it was a pleasure to listen to them. Marlo was a good, respectable fellow; we could have nothing against him, so the two were together in every free moment, with their music. In a short time our Melchior had learned to play from him, and soon he did much better than his teacher, so Marlo said himself. But then he acquired such a love for music that it came before everything else. Marlo then went away, but left the mandolin there; Melchior had bought it of the fellow. My husband was not pleased to have music played so often in the day and it is true our Melchior had to be brought away again and again from his playing to the mill. Then he began to think of going abroad and we thought travelling and new knowledge in his trade might do him good. So he left us. He wrote us faithfully where he was but about what he was doing he wrote nothing.

“After two years my husband wrote him that

he must come home. Then Melchior answered he could not come yet, but he would tell the truth, he had spent the whole time studying music, but had learned a great deal and this he would now turn to good account. Then he would come home. My husband said: 'He will never come back again!' and was so overcome with pain and sorrow and indignation that he became seriously ill.

"I always said: 'He will surely come back again sometime!' And this hope kept me up. Melchior wrote now and then, until nearly fourteen years ago. Then a letter came saying he had gone to Italy and thought of remaining there. It was the last. He really must have married down there soon after, but I was not wrong; our Melchior wanted to come again and bring us his little boy.

"But now we must go, and take Jörli to his grandfather. I mustn't stay here any longer. And you are coming too. You are the second grandfather. You will stay with Jörli and with us."

Jörli screamed with delight: "Grandfather, now you know where you are going. Now you

will not have to go out on the road!" And in his delight he embraced his grandmother and exclaimed again and again:

"Thank you a thousand, thousand times!" and for joy he could find no other words except to keep repeating: "For Grandfather! For Grandfather!"

This unexpected statement from the miller's wife so overpowered him that he did not dare to believe it at all. To have a permanent home, suddenly to be free from all care and besides to live always with his Jörli, who now belonged in such a good house, was much more than he had ever dared ask for. He stood there as if he did not know whether he had heard aright. But Jörli was sure of the matter. He rushed up into his grandfather's familiar chamber, took the few articles of clothing hanging and lying there, rolled one over another, and tied a string around the whole. Then he threw the bundle on his shoulder and ran downstairs with it.

"That is right, Jörli," said his grandmother with satisfaction; "now we will go."

Then the old man saw that it was an actual fact. He ran into the house to shake Lena's

hand, then came out. In his heart's joy, he ran like a youth down the mountain, and before they were aware of it, all three had reached the hotel at Gsteig.

"Now harness quickly," the miller's wife ordered, "and then let the bay run as fast as he can. I'm in a hurry to get home."

Supper was over at Stauffer's Mill, the men had gone out, and the miller had seated himself alone at his little table. He was ill at ease. He rose again and walked back and forth. Then he heard wagon-wheels. He stood still. "What? No, no, that surely is not she!" he said to himself. "She won't give up, even if she has to travel around the country for a week, until she discovers something." The wagon came nearer. It stopped. The miller went out.

"Stauffer, come here!" his wife called to him; "come take the boy out of the carriage; he belongs to us, he belongs to Melchior!"

The miller came speechless along, lifted the boy out of the wagon and led him to the lantern-light.

"Is it you, Jörli, is it you?" Then he took him by the hand and led him into the living-room.



Here in the bright light he looked at him searchingly as if he wanted to scan each feature and dwell on it, but he said not a word. The miller's wife had now come in and behind her the mountain guide Fretz.

"Stauffer, you mustn't have any doubt," said his wife, stepping up to her silent husband; "I have proof that he belongs to us as surely as Melchior belonged to us."

"Wife, I am not doubting it for a moment," said the miller in a brighter tone than he had spoken for a long time. "If some one had come to me and said: 'This is your Melchior's son!' and hadn't given a single proof of it, I would have believed it. He is Melchior in every motion and everything he takes hold of cleverly and turns it and moves it exactly as Melchior did so that I have often been frightened and thought it was something like a man's double we hear about. So you are my grandson, Jörli," the miller continued, grasping the boy's hand. "And are you glad to come back to the mill and to your grandfather?"

"Yes indeed, so glad," answered Jörli with

happy eyes, "and also glad to come to my grandmother!"

"That is right!" said the miller shaking the boy's hand vigorously. "Come here, Grandmother, let us sit down together and enjoy ourselves. They must prepare supper outside, and all must sit down here so that during the happy meal everything can be retold in order as it happened. Jörli must know that he is welcomed by his grandparents."

Then the miller's wife brought along the mountain guide who was standing perfectly still in a corner and said:

"Here is some one else who must rejoice with us. It is Jörli's second grandfather, who has brought the boy up for us and whom we can never thank enough for it."

The miller shook the old man's hand warmly.

The miller's wife undertook to tell the story this time for she knew now everything that had happened and the mountain guide did not lose by her description of what he had really done for Melchior and then for his little boy.

After she had described the night on the St. Bernhard, a silence ensued—she could not say

another word. The miller went out. When he came back, he first pressed silently the guide's hand, then sat down beside Jörli, clapped him a few times on the shoulder and said:

“Now, let us be glad, Jörli, that you are here where you belong. What would you like to be? What would you like best of all to become? Speak it out, freely!”

“A miller,” was the immediate answer, “and best of all one with a beautiful mill, like yours, Grandfather.”

The miller laughed out loud, and one could see that he laughed with his whole heart.

“Now look at me! He knows what is right! He hasn't eyes in his head for nothing!” he exclaimed, and the deep furrows in his forehead had all disappeared. “Jörli, to-morrow I will show you how to drive the bay horse and later with the four gray ones. I will soon see how the young Stauffer-miller drives his horses through the country. Come, here's to you, my boy! To Stauffer's Mill and the young miller within!”

The miller's wife had to keep looking at her husband—he was so changed. He had grown twenty years younger since the day before. Then

she looked once more at her Jörli and her eyes had an expression which Jörli well understood. Every moment he seized her hand and said beaming with joy: "Grandmother, now I am at home with you."

The old guide's face shone the whole time like a bright sun. Now he folded his hands and said:

"If I might sing a song of praise with Jörli, I should have nothing more to wish for. I should like to tell my Heavenly Father how full of praise and thanksgiving my heart is, and I can express it best by singing."

Jörli looked at his grandfather in alarm, for he knew well that he could not bear music. But the miller nodded kindly to him: "Go ahead! Sing away! When my young miller has finished his day's work he may sing songs of praise for his grandmother as much as he likes."

Then the mountain guide began in his strong bass and Jörli joined with his clear ringing voice. Then his grandmother laid the mandolin gently in Jörli's hands for she loved the soft tones of the strings, they brought to her heart the memory of past happy days. The miller listened contentedly. When the closing words were sung:

All must sing, their praises voicing—  
Those on earth and those rejoicing  
With Thee now in Heaven above!

the miller's wife went out softly. She climbed up to the attic and leaned out of the open window. The moonlight lay bright on the white road far below. "I can no longer watch for him to see if he is coming home," she said looking along the road on which she had looked every evening for her son. "Now I know that he will never come again. Oh, my dear Lord, if only he is with Thee in Heaven, I will mourn no more." She had to wipe away abundant tears. She did it carefully for she wanted to return with a happy face to the happy ones below.

The following morning when all the household were gathered for breakfast, the miller said in a loud voice:

"I have something to tell you to-day. This boy here is my grandson. You must all recognize him from this time as the son of the house. My son died suddenly on his way home, and this excellent man took the unknown little boy and brought him up in the fear of God and honesty



so that he is well fitted for the house where he belongs. This man you are to regard and esteem as my grandson's second grandfather."

The mill-hands all hung their heads as they went out of the house, for each one thought he would be discharged that very day, for Jörli would surely tell his grandfather how he had been treated. Tall Kaspar was the most worried. Jörli went somewhat timidly to the mill, for his grandfather had given him a message for the people, and he thought to himself perhaps now they would be still more bitter towards him because he would now be better off than any of them. But when he entered he found to his amazement that the men had all completely changed. Each one wanted to be the friendliest, each wanted to do something quite special for him to conciliate him. Tall Kaspar acted exactly as if it was fortunate for him if Jörli would give him even a word. This change was an un hoped for pleasure to Jörli and at once took away from his heart all the burden which had been lying there; for he had been very much afraid of all the men's unfriendliness. Now in his heart's delight he was as friendly towards them

all as if he had never experienced the least trouble from them. This disturbed the fellows very much, so that with genuine cordiality they surrounded him and each one offered him his hand and congratulated him upon entering the mill for the first time as the master's son.

When Jörli had gone out again, the foreman said to the others:

“We have done him a great deal of wrong and yet he bears us no ill-will on that account. Something must be done.”

All day long he thought more deeply than he had ever done in his whole life before. Finally he decided what to do. That evening he led all the others behind the mill for a rehearsal, and then under the living-room window where the four members of the family were still sitting together. Suddenly a loud song came up to the window:

We welcome you, young Miller lad,  
Back to the Stauffer Mill!  
Good knowledge of your trade you've had  
and most astounding skill:  
And so we sing this greeting true;  
You'll be a real Head-master too!

The master immediately opened the window, called them all in, and was so much delighted he brought out a good drink for them such as they had never tasted since they had been in his house.

Happiness has once more returned to Stauffer's Mill. Every evening songs of praise sound through the courtyard and sweetly sounds the mandolin with them. Not a day goes by that the miller doesn't once bring his wife over to the mill.

"You must see him at his work," he urges every time anew for he cannot look at Jörli enough, as he jumps from one task to another as swiftly as a squirrel, and begins and finishes each with the same adroitness. The grandmother unites with the grandfather in his words of praise. As she goes past the beautifully filled white sacks, she never fails to remind her husband:

"You know, Stauffer, what you have promised me: as soon as you have a few free days, that we should make the journey up to the St. Bernhard. We have a great deal to thank the kind monks for; we are deeply indebted to them. Some of these full sacks must go with us, and other things besides."

When the miller is alone again with his wife, he says repeatedly:

“You don’t know how things are going in the mill now! It seems since Jörli came there as if all the men had changed for the better and they look at me quite differently from what they did before. Life has become worth while again. I often think in the evening I have never heard anything that did one so much good as your songs of praise.”

“Yes, Stauffer, I know it,” his wife then says; “he who no longer has any ill-will in his heart looks up to Heaven differently and looks at men differently than before. Even if our Melchior cannot come to us again, as he desired, he has sent a blessing to our house, which atones for the sorrow of the days that are past and can make us happy again.”

# LAURI'S RESCUE

## I

### THRUSH MANOR

**T**HE estate on the meadow-crowned hill above La Tour, with the old trees in the courtyard, had not received its name without reason. As soon as spring came there sounded from every branch up there the rejoicing and exulting of the merry birds, which in flocks had built their nests in the thick tops of the plane trees, and in the beeches and alders in the adjoining woods.

“Do you hear the dear birds again?” asked the Major’s wife, who was briskly walking about the estate, accompanied by her husband, the Major. “They are the dearest little creatures in all the world!”

“I think so too, except Schnufferle,” replied the Major in a comically serious way.

“Oh, don’t always be teasing me about Schnuf-

ferle," retorted his wife. "If he doesn't sing like the thrushes, he is a trusty little creature and uses his voice, as it was given him to do, to protect his mistress."

The little snow-white dog with his soft, silky hair and jolly head, as round as a ball, was tripping contentedly beside his mistress. Suddenly he raised a frightful noise, barked furiously towards one side and behaved as if he would angrily devour the man in the yellow jacket, who, stepping out from a side path onto the road almost brushed against the Major's wife.

"Be quiet now, Schnufferle, you see he didn't do me any harm," said the Major's wife soothingly, as the enraged dog kept on barking at the retreating man. "The fellow doesn't look agreeable," she continued turning to her husband. "Who is he? You spoke to him."

"He is the so-called Hungarian," replied the Major, "but whether that is really his name or whether he came from Hungary, I have not been able to find out. He is seen around here in all the villages. What he really does, nobody knows; he doesn't work at any regular trade. He hasn't a very good reputation."



The Major von Lormann and his wife with their constant little companion were well-known people in the region. The workers in the vineyards along the way everywhere greeted them very courteously, and the Major spoke a friendly word to many of them as he passed by.

A boy came running up the steep path, leading straight down to the lake. From a distance he held out his hand to the Major's wife, who seemed to be his especial guardian. Schnufferle also was decidedly a friend of the approaching boy, for he ran towards him, sprang up on him, wagging his tail and barking loudly with delight at seeing him.

"Where did you come from, Lauri?" asked the Major's wife, holding out her hand to him. "Why are you not in school at this time? To-day is surely not a holiday, is it?"

"No, but—because somebody had to go down to Vivis, I said I would go," explained Lauri somewhat crestfallen.

"Yes, I believe that you would be willing to go, but why are you allowed to run about so? Does any one at home know about it, Lauri? Have you been on another expedition to destroy

the birds' nests, although it is strictly forbidden, and you promised me faithfully never to do it again? Have you been doing that again?"

"No, surely not, never again," asserted Lauri, and looked so honestly with his open blue eyes at the lady, that she had to believe him.

"I was only—I was only sailing on the water, it was so blue and lovely."

"Were you sailing on the lake, Lauri? But who gives you a boat, how did you come by one?" the Major's wife demanded.

"I know somebody who often rows for a man who has a boat, and he has taught me to row, and when no one is there I take the boat and go out. I know how very well," said Lauri with assurance.

"You must never do that; how do you dare take a boat away from its owner when he is not there?" said the Major's wife emphatically, "and what does your teacher say when you stay away from school so without any reason; won't you be punished for it?"

"No, he is used to it," replied Lauri conclusively.

The Major's wife could hardly suppress a

laugh, but it soon passed and she said very earnestly:

“No, Lauri, this cannot go on. Tell your mother I have something to say to her; she must come over here soon.”

Whereupon she offered the boy her hand and went after her husband, who meanwhile had been slowly walking up the hill Chailly. Schnufferle had to take leave of Lauri; he jumped up again on the boy and licked his hand.

“Give me your paw, Schnufferle, like a good fellow,” said Lauri, and when the little white creature prettily obliged, Lauri shook his little paw and said earnestly:

“There now be good, Schnufferle, and good-bye!”

Then he went his way, but Schnufferle stood still a moment and looked back. After his mistress Lauri came next; this was plainly seen. When the Major's wife had overtaken her husband again, she said in great excitement:

“Lauri is such a nice boy, I like him the best of all the neighbors' children who run around the place. But there is no order in the house, so the boy can run wherever he likes and at any

time and he looks quite neglected too in his clothes; his mother ought not to let him go so. The people are not so badly off that they don't know how to help themselves, are they?"

"Not at all," replied the Major; "if they looked after things, they could live quite well. Linott lives on his own land, has a productive little vineyard and is a good worker, and a good man besides. If his wife does in her place what the man does in his, they can't be badly off. Among the neighbors' children I like the farmer's neat little daughter the best," he added.

"Yes, yes, our little Amei is so clean and neat; there is no one like her," the Major's wife quickly agreed, "but she belongs on the place. I was not counting her. She has the right kind of mother, too. How exemplary she is in keeping her three boys in order, while poor Lauri always has to go around with holes in his jacket and torn shirt-sleeves. He would be a splendid boy, nice as any other, if he was kept clean and neat like Amei's brothers."

They had now reached the top of Chailly and the Major took the road which, at the end of the village, leads back to the lake and the green hill

of Thrush Manor. A woman was just entering the open gate and then was going with hurried steps to the manor house.

"There is nobody at home; the master and his wife have gone to walk," called a voice from the farmer's house. "Can I do anything for you?"

Frau Barrell was standing in the doorway of her house, and waited for an answer. The visitor, who as well as the farmer's wife had come from the near-by district of Bern and therefore considered herself an old friend of the farmer's wife, turned around and stood in front of the farmhouse.

"I always have bad luck," she said excitedly. "I needed so much to talk with the Major's wife, and now I shall have to go right away."

"Are you really in such a hurry?" said Frau Barrell quietly.

"Really in a great hurry. As soon as she has given me an answer I am going down to Vivis to arrange everything to-day," replied Frau Linott quickly. "She will surely help, if one wants to undertake something right. I have always heard that of her. Don't you think so too? You know her best."

“ I think you are speaking about the Major’s wife,” said Frau Barrell, coolly. “ There is no better lady than she is, about helping and standing by one when it is needed, but if it is unnecessary or if she doesn’t consider it worth while, she does nothing.”

“ Yes, yes, I understand that very well, but you wouldn’t think that it was necessary only to help your children and not others,” said Frau Linott, a little irritated, “ although others might need it too.”

“ Our lady loves to do for children above all, and not only for ours,” replied Frau Barrell quietly; “ you ought to know how many she has already helped!”

“ Where are your three sons? Surely all well provided for? The Major’s wife must have helped them not a little,” said Frau Linott.

“ No, not a little, a great deal,” stated her neighbor calmly. “ We realize how much we have to thank her and her husband for. Our oldest is now twenty-one years old and already has a position as farmer on the Virginia estate above Vivis. Of course our employer helped him to that. The second one is studying agriculture



hard in every way on a large estate in North Germany with a relative of the Major's wife, who sent him there, and the third, who is seventeen, is an apprentice to a mechanic. He has so much interest in the work, the Major said he must go at once to be an apprentice to a good master, which is very important. Then he chose the master himself, and he is in Geneva."

"Yes, yes, farmer, agriculturist, and mechanic. You are fortunate. You only have to say: 'Table, set yourself,' " said Frau Linott a little scornfully; "not every one can do that."

Then Frau Barrell's little ten-year-old daughter came running across the courtyard.

"Mother, the hens have laid so many eggs, I couldn't count them, and they are all so clean to-day, snow-white," she called out in great delight from a distance to her mother.

"Well, that is delightful," she answered, "but first say good afternoon when somebody is here. You must not think unkindly of the child; she was only so delighted about the eggs she forgot to greet you. She likes to help me here and there, and is so happy when everything thrives in the garden and hen-house."

The child now came up and offered her hand to Frau Linott.

Her thick brown braids were so neatly wound around the child's head, her simple dress and bright colored apron, her round child's face, with the laughing eyes, all looked so fresh and clean, that all sorts of comparative thoughts came to Frau Linott.

"Yes, I should really think," she said, as if answering her own thoughts, "you could keep her so dressed up; you have only the one in the house, and usually not much else to do but to look after her, but it is quite different with ours. If I take the two little boys to wash them, of what use is it? Ten minutes later they both look as if they had crawled through the chimney. So it is just as well to let them be; and if I only think how Lauri tears his jackets; every evening he puts both his elbows through the holes."

"Why didn't Lauri come to school to-day?" now asked the child urgently. "I had something important to say to him."

"Yes, you would have something important to say to each other," retorted Frau Linott, "but he really must have been in school as he is every

day; you may not always know exactly whether he is there or not; he is not in your class."

"Yes, really and truly I always know," asserted the child. "I always wait for him under the nut-tree, and if he gets there first, he waits for me and then we go together."

"There come the master and mistress, to be sure! I will go over into the house, or they might think we were gossiping foolishly," said Frau Linott hurriedly and ran over to the master's house.

The Major's wife had just seated herself at her work-table when she was informed that Frau Linott would like to speak to her.

"What is it, Frau Linott?" she asked in a friendly way as she came in. "The children are all well? There is no bad news that brings you over?"

"No, but thank you, Frau von Lormann, for the enquiry," replied the woman obsequiously. "I only had a great favor to ask, and because you are so kind and so ready to help where it is needed, and besides when one wants to do something for the children, and has to use all one's strength in every way for them, so I dared hope

you would not refuse a request, since it would be for the benefit of the whole family who try to earn an honest living and naturally would do everything to get on better, although there are six children and growing larger, and would like to bring each one up properly and would not shirk any work, and keep going early and late ——”

“ Well, when are you coming to the request? ”  
The lady impatiently interrupted the long continued speech.

“ Yes, to make the matter short,” Frau Linott went on, “ with your permission I will tell you right away what it is about. Down in Vivis there is a place open in a shop which would bring in something fine, and I could get it because a relative of mine has influence there and knows how I would interest myself in filling the place satisfactorily, and it would suit me so well, because I could always be home early in the evening, as it is not far away, and could put everything in the house in order for the next day. And so I need nothing except a so-called oil-stove, which would be so convenient because Lauri cannot manage with the pans, and at noon something

has to be cooked for his father and the children. So then Lauri could get along very well with cooking porridge and in the meantime I should have a good income and could pay you back in a little while what I owed you, if you would be so kind as to help me about the oil-stove, since the expense of it is beyond my means."

"And besides helping Lauri and the other little ones to set the house on fire over their heads, while you and your husband were away," said the Major's wife drily.

"No, no, you mustn't think that," objected Frau Linott, who seemed hardly to realize such a possibility. "I have taken good care of all that. The old widow, Brisi, lives in the house next us, and she will always see that Lauri cooks his food when she prepares hers, for we have the same kitchen."

"Well, and who will mend all the holes and tears which will be surely made through the day by the six? You would hardly have any more time or taste late in the evening to begin mending," said the lady.

"Well, there wouldn't be any more than before; you know very well you can buy ready-

made things in the store and three times cheaper than formerly you could make the smallest thing," said Frau Linott volubly, "and the time it takes to mend would bring in double, if you are skilful."

"Is your husband willing to have you earn money away from home?" asked the Major's wife shortly.

"No, no, not at all," quickly replied Frau Linott; "he is really the best man in the world, and good and industrious, like nobody else, but he is old-fashioned and has no idea what the profit is in the new establishments. He thinks if I have some urgent work to do and leave the children alone at home, one will immediately jump into the fire, and another into the water, and that is an unnecessary anxiety; the smallest is already four years old and knows so well how to help herself, and the others who do not yet go to school can look out for her, and the three oldest come home so early from school, they are big enough to keep the little ones in order. You must have courage to undertake a thing if you want to get ahead, and I have that already, only I must have just a little help, and for my hus-



band it would be particularly right if you would stand by me; then my husband would see at once that the matter is a good thing and worth while, and the profit from it would stand us in good stead, for in half a year we should get ahead more than usually in six years."

"Frau Linott, are you in difficulty, have you had some kind of losses?" asked the Major's wife. "Tell me that clearly and simply; such a thing can happen. I believe if you would manage right, you might be happy and care-free on your own land."

"Yes, yes, that is true and I know of no misfortune, but still I should like to get ahead," replied Frau Linott eagerly. "One would like to lay up something for the future for one's self and one's children, so that one can have better days some time, like other people; you can really understand that, and surely will help towards it, so that I could undertake a good job which would help a great deal to get ahead."

"Do you think so? Do you know, Frau Linott, what I think of your plan is that if you follow the path you have laid out for yourself, you will succeed in bringing sorrow and not hap-

piness to yourself for the future and also for the present,” replied the lady forcibly. “What will become of your children if you are away the whole day and there is nobody to look after them? Your Lauri already is running so wild, that I feel very sorry for the boy. In school-time he sails around on the lake, and who knows what people he is with? He is ragged and untidy and could look quite different if his mother would direct her eyes to him a little. What a fine boy you have in Lauri! It is surely worth the trouble for you to look after him, so that he will remain as childlike and frank as he is now, and not come under bad influences. How can you prevent the boy, so wide-awake and easily led away, from coming into bad company, if no one knows where he is running and how he spends his time? And this Lauri, who is not more than eleven years old, would have the care of five younger brothers and sisters, all exactly of an age to get into every possible mischief! Besides he would have to cook in the house on a very dangerous oil-stove—no, Frau Linott, I will not raise my hand for that. No wise mother, and no one that loved her children, would want to

undertake anything like that, unless the greatest necessity compelled her to. That is not the case with you. If you would like work to do at home I will willingly do what I can to send you such, but I will not help your oil-stove plan with a single penny. You can tell your husband that from me, and besides that I will be glad for him and you and especially for the children, if he can prevent you from carrying out your plan until your youngest is a few years older than your oldest is now."

Frau Linott no longer looked so obsequious as at the beginning of their conversation. Repressed anger flashed from her eyes.

"I understand that you do not know how it is when one wants to get ahead, and have as much as others," she said sharply. "I only believed you would be willing to do something for our children as you do for others and generously."

Frau Linott now felt that she had said enough. The Major's wife said nothing more. She only indicated by a motion of her hand that Frau Linott should leave, which she very well understood and went out.

## II

## IN THE NARCISSUS FIELD

EARLY the next morning the little girl, with her brown braids fresh and neat, was standing under the nut-tree, and looking searchingly back on the road. Then Lauri came sauntering along whistling.

“Come a little faster, Lauri!” called his friend to him. “Yesterday I waited so long for you and I had something so important to tell you, that would delight you, then you never came at all. Why didn’t you come to school?”

The boy ran towards her. “What was it? What do you know that is important and would please me, Amei?” he exclaimed expectantly. “I will tell you afterwards why I did not come to school. Hurry and tell me what you know.”

“The narcissus blossoms are coming up; they will all be open by Saturday. Mother said so,” stated Amei, “and then we have no school and could go up to Glion and stay there the whole afternoon and evening, and get whole baskets-

ful. Don't you know how lovely it was up there last year?"

"Yes, yes, to be sure, I know very well! We will go right away to-morrow, it is too long to wait until Saturday!" exclaimed Lauri, who was at once fire and flame for all pleasure excursions.

"No, we can't do that. What are you thinking about?" replied Amei a little reprovingly. "To-morrow is Thursday and we must go to school, and afterwards it would be much too late. Or do you think we can say: 'Let us go to the narcissus blossoms and not go to school?' Yes, I really believe you would be willing to do so if you only dared. But why didn't you come to school yesterday?"

Lauri had shrugged his shoulders with a top-lofty air when Amei said if he only dared.

"I really dare; it wouldn't hurt anybody," he then said. "I have already done it and did not go to school yesterday."

Amei looked at him very much shocked.

"But Lauri, if your father knew and your mother, then you would be so punished that you would surely wish you hadn't done so," she said very much pained.

"They won't hear anything about it, I don't see how they could," Lauri admitted. "Father is away at work all day and Mother never asks anything about where I have been, so it is all the same whether I go to school once more or less, it doesn't make any difference."

"Yes, but the teacher," objected Amei, "he surely asks why you stayed away, and what will you say then?"

"Then I will only say Father sent me somewhere to do an errand. I can do that for it often happens so," said Lauri unconcerned.

"Yes, but not this time. You would really not lie, Lauri, you would not do that?" Amei cried out full of anguish.

"That is not lying, it is only an excuse," stated Lauri. "Often when I have had to run errands for Mother, and did not go to school for two or three times in succession, she said we must only find some good excuse then it would be all right."

Amei was much surprised at this explanation of things and did not know what she ought to do about it. She would ask her mother when she went home. Then she suddenly exclaimed:



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“It is really frightfully late, Lauri, come, run, so that we shall not be too late!”

Like an arrow she shot away down the mountain to school. Lauri ran leaping behind her.

On Saturday the sun shone over the whole lake and a deep blue sky stretched far away above all the craggy mountains and all the green vineyard covered hills. Lauri and Amei with merry chatter climbed up the mountain.

“There they are! There they are!” screamed Amei suddenly in delight, and rushed up the last stretch of the height, along the foot-path on the green mountainside to the meadow. There they lay spread out far and wide and down the slope, like a great, shining snow-field, as white and dazzling as if fresh snow had really just fallen from the sky. But they were the white narcissus blossoms, which had opened all their calyxes and petal after petal looked up to the invigorating sun. A sweet aromatic fragrance rose from the flowers and filled the whole air for a long distance. Amei ran ahead and sat down in the midst of the blossoms, taking in long breaths of the sweet odor.

“Come, sit down here,” she called to Lauri.

who remained standing on the path, "you must really see what a lovely fragrance there is here; there is nothing better in the whole world."

"Can you still see the lake from there?" he asked hesitating.

"Yes, to be sure, and all the narcissus flowers far, far away to the forest. Just come and see!" urged Amei.

Then Lauri came along and sat down by her.

"Now you see how beautiful it is," continued Amei enthusiastically, "all the thousands and thousands of white flowers and how wonderfully they smell!" And Amei had to draw in another long, full breath of the sweet fragrance. "And you can see the lake too, with all the little boats and the sunshine on it. See how beautiful! It is surely nowhere else so beautiful in the whole world as it is here with us! Don't you think so too?"

The lake now shone like molten gold, with the noonday sun gleaming down on it. Here and there little boats with their white sails moved over the shining water. Lauri had been looking at it for a long time.

"Yes, and the most beautiful of all is down

there," he now agreed. "You see I sailed around all day long like that on the lake, on Tuesday, and that was why I did not come to school. Oh, how lovely it was! And I can go again, and then you must come too. Then we will sail far around. And if you don't want to come on account of school, we can go on a Saturday afternoon like to-day."

"But who gives you a boat?" asked Amei, who did not think the matter so credible.

"Well, you see I know some one who often takes strangers out on the lake in boats. The sailboats do not belong to him but he can take one when there are no strangers to go out, and then he gives it to me. And just think what he told me," continued Lauri, getting more and more excited. "If I could earn money, eighty or a hundred francs, I could buy a boat for myself and sail around as much as I liked, day and night, and he thinks perhaps he can get me a job, so that I can get the money as I naturally haven't a bit."

"What are you thinking about, Lauri, don't believe him," exclaimed Amei in great excitement, "he is making fun of you; how would

you earn a hundred francs? And you don't need any money. We can have all the beauty without money. It is just as beautiful here as down on the lake. There is nothing more beautiful than the narcissus flowers. And then come the strawberries and the wild raspberries, and we can get them all without money. You know how beautiful it always is then and what we always find up there in the forest."

"Yes, but you don't know all you can have for money, quite different things that you don't know about, or else you would want them too, and would a thousand times rather have them than these narcissus flowers," said Lauri somewhat scornfully.

"No, no, not at all," replied Amei feeling her beloved narcissus blossoms insulted, "and I don't know why you suddenly think so. You have liked them all as well as I, and your greatest pleasure was to go after the narcissus blossoms and the strawberries and raspberries in the woods. Why do you think now all of a sudden that it would be more fun to do something that costs money? There is nothing at all that is more beautiful or more delightful."

“ I thought so too, but there are many, many more beautiful things,” insisted Lauri. “ You don’t know, but now I know, for the man I go sailing on the lake with has told me, and you can have everything if you have money. So I want to earn a lot of money. And you would like it well enough too, if we could sail together across the lake and then stop at the pavilion on the shore where they have music and listen to it.”

Amei did not know just what she ought to think. What Lauri pictured would really be something quite splendid, but it seemed to her quite impossible. What would her mother say about it? It seemed to her that her mother would not agree to such a journey.

Then a man came strolling along on the path by the meadow. His crumpled hat sat on one side of his head and in his hand he was swinging a thick hazel stick to and fro. When he caught sight of the children he stood still.

“ Hey, Lauri,” he called across, “ have you a little friend? That is right! Bring her some time to sail in the boat!” Then he went along.

Amei looked after him greatly frightened.

"Do you know him, Lauri?" she said in a low voice although the man had already turned the corner far away.

"Yes, to be sure," replied Lauri gaily, "he is the one I know so well and who lets me sail on the lake and is so friendly with me."

"No, no, you must not know him," exclaimed Amei full of distress, "he is not a good man; he is the Hun. My mother said I must keep out of his way whenever I see him, and if he tries to speak to me I must run away quickly."

"Then perhaps your mother doesn't know him right," said Lauri. "You ought to know how kind he is and all the presents he has already given me; so many figs and almonds and a knife and a good deal of money too."

"No, no, Lauri, you must not take anything from him," cried Amei more and more distressed, "he can do you harm, perhaps you wouldn't notice it. My mother knows him very well and my father too; they say nobody should have anything to do with him."

Lauri could never bear long such gloomy states of mind. He then sprang to his feet. "Come, Amei, let us pick so many narcissus flowers that



your basket will be quite full," he cried, while he began to work with fiery zeal. "And do you know what! Afterwards we will go still farther down to the stone bridge; there I will show you a prettier sight than you have ever seen before!"

Then Amei too was on her feet, and the gathering of the glorious flowers in rivalry with Lauri, the lovely breeze, wafting whole surges of sweet scent to her, and the smiling sunshine on all the heights soon dispelled Amei's trouble, and with gay laughter the children ran to and fro, for each thought here and then there the most beautiful of all the flowers were to be found, and one tried to outdo the other.

Then there were so many bunches of flowers placed in the basket, no more could be pressed in. So Amei seized the handle on one side, Lauri on the other, and they trotted down the mountain to the stone bridge. Lauri let go the basket and leaned far over the broad stone parapet.

"Come, see! see!" he urged with hushed voice in order not to frighten what Amei was to see.

She came quickly along.

A hole had been broken out in the masonry of the old bridge; there happy birds had built their

dainty little nest. In it sat seven young birds, opening their bills and peeping very excitedly, as if they wanted to answer the mother who tripped back and forth on the edge of the wall, then flew up in the air a little, then turned back again and peeped and coaxed and again took a short flight in the air and returned. She evidently wanted to show her children how it was done and was luring them out for a first flight. But the little ones were afraid, and so they peeped back in excitement to their mother.

That means: "We can't! We can't!" But then from the middle of the nest a little, courageous yellow birdling hopped out on the edge of the wall to its mother. She peeped encouragingly to him, then spread out her wings, so that he could plainly see, swung herself up and flew to the alder tree above the brook. Then the little one did exactly as the mother had done—he spread his wings out, took a great swing and suddenly—there he was up on the same branch where his mother sat waiting for him. Then the little one peeped and screamed over to his brothers in the hole in the wall and rocked himself to and fro on his branch up in the blue sky,

as if he really wanted to call to them: "Come out of the nest way up here; it is glorious! Come out!"

But the mother flew back to the edge of the wall again and coaxed and threatened and flew up and down until she had lured the second bird for his first flight out of the nest and then the third and fourth, the fifth and sixth. There they sat all six of them in the alder tree and made a great noise and chirped for joy in every tone. But the mother flew back again and fluttered anxiously around the nest for the little seventh was still sitting deep inside and would not come out, no matter how encouragingly she coaxed and moved her wings to teach him. Many times he spread his tiny wings a little, then folded them quickly again and dropped deep into the nest.

"You stupid little winged thing," exclaimed Lauri indignantly, "can't you use them at all? If I only had your wings! I would fly away with them at once! You ought to be a snail, not a bird."

"Don't be so cross with him, he is really afraid," said Amei, sympathetically; "just think,

to have to come out of the nest for the first time and then to soar so high right away, and besides over a big brook! I would not dare to either."

"But I would," said Lauri quickly. "Only think if we had wings then I would dare, to be sure! I would fly right away high over the mountains and farther and farther in the blue sky to the sea."

"Be still, Lauri, don't frighten him," said Amei softly; "see, he is coming out, now he dares."

Really the mother's tireless alluring calls had at last given the little nestling courage. It spread its wings and flew up. But, alas, it flew only as far as the parapet of the bridge, dropped down and trembled with fright. The mother flew quickly back, for she had gone ahead to show him the way as she had done with the others. Now no more friendly calls to follow were heard; with a shrill cry of distress she fluttered around the helpless little bird, turned her eyes full of anguish first to one then to both children to see if they would really harm her trembling little one. Her sharp cry of distress grew louder and louder.

"I will catch it, then we can take it with us and put it in a cage," proposed Lauri.

"No, no, let it alone," opposed Amei, "you surely hear how frightfully distressed the mother is. Just see how she flies around more and more frightened. Oh, if I only could help the trembling little bird! What can we do? Put it back in the nest? Can we do that, Lauri?"

"We can't reach the nest from up here," said Lauri, with a scrutinizing look down into the hole in the wall, "we should only throw it into the brook, and it would drown. I would rather take it home."

"No, no, let it be. I know what, only come," said Amei, softly, going along the wall to the place where the little bird sat crouching on the parapet of the bridge. Then she grasped it gently with both hands and carried it across the bridge to the alder tree, on the branch of which the little brothers were still chirping away merrily.

The mother followed after with her continuous cries of anguish, and then flew nearer in a circle above Amei's head round and round.

"Now you must climb up, Lauri, and then I

will hand the bird to you," ordered Amei, "and then you must set it up on the branch, there, where the others are sitting and singing; then the mother can fly up to it, and then she will surely see that it doesn't fall down."

Lauri examined the trunk of the tree; it was very high and smooth.

"Yes, yes, your order is a good one, Amei," he then said. "I can climb up to it only if I can hold on fast with both hands, and when I am up, you are much too small to reach the bird up to me, and if I should hold it in my hand it would be finely crushed."

Amei realized immediately that it was really so, as Lauri said; he could climb so well, she had thought it would be quite easy to carry out her plan. Now she stood there at her wit's ends, the poor little bird trembled so in her hands she could feel it, and above her the mother darted to and fro with her cries of distress growing more and more intense.

Lauri had picked up a worm from the ground.

"Open your hands," he said, "I will give the bird something to eat; perhaps he is hungry.



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Birds like worms. I know it for sure, only hold your hand away."

Amei obeyed, but before Lauri could put the worm in its bill, the little bird suddenly spread its wings and flew up and with its rejoicing mother swung itself gladly up to the alder tree. Then it sat on the green branch and sang with the others up to the blue sky. Amei stood dumb with astonishment. She did not understand how the little bird had found its way so easily and quickly.

"Do you really see the lazy, little fellow? From sheer fear of us he got the courage to fly away," said Lauri. "The mother needn't have called and chirped to him so long; she ought to have pecked him well, that would have helped more quickly."

"Yes, you would not like it at all if your mother pecked you, when you didn't want to follow," said Amei to whom such a training did not seem desirable.

The mother bird now came far out on the branch and chirped down to the children in quite different tones from those she had evoked before in her great distress. She sounded so happy and

glad as she sang, exactly as if she was calling: "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!" Amei and Lauri both heard quite distinctly that it really sounded so.

The sun had already disappeared behind the mountains some time before, but the bird's fate had so occupied Amei's attention that she had forgotten everything else on account of it. Now she jumped up in alarm:

"Come quickly, Lauri, the sun has gone. Mother said just as soon as the sun went behind the mountains, I must stop and now I didn't notice when it went. We must run with all our might, so that it will not be too late."

"There is no need to hurry so," said Lauri, who was never in haste to go home. "Your mother will not always know exactly when you get home."

"Yes, really, she always knows that, of course," replied Amei. "She is surely at home and waiting for me. Doesn't your mother say anything when you come home late?"

"No, she does not, she doesn't know either where I am," Lauri informed her, "and almost never when I come home, so it is really no mat-

ter. I only creep quickly into bed afterwards. Don't run like a weasel! See, Amei, there are strawberries, but they are not quite ripe yet. There is a red and yellow butterfly; wait a little, I want to catch it."

But Amei did not allow herself to be detained any longer. She ran on without even turning round. Then Lauri had to go on too, for he would not let her carry the basket alone and besides Lauri was so constituted that he soon yielded and agreed, if any one remained firm in his own mind. So he now hurried fast with Amei, and before darkness had really come on, they ran into the courtyard. The farmer's wife was standing in the doorway, for she had been watching for her Amei for some time. With great delight she first greeted the child then took the basket filled with flowers.

"You must take a bunch of them right away to the Major's wife," she then said, "and you must have some too, Lauri. You gathered them together; you can take them home to your mother."

"She doesn't care for them; she would only throw them away," said Lauri. "She says she

has no room for such things. I should like to take mine to the Major's wife too. May I?"

"Yes, certainly, so go quickly over together, each with a bouquet," said the mother, "but come right back again, it is already quite dark."

The children ran across to the big house. The Major's wife was just coming in from the garden and was still standing in the large entrance hall. She received the children with much friendliness and was delighted with the fragrant bouquets of narcissus. Then she called the maid to bring each of the children a generous piece of apple-cake, for they must have a reward, she said.

White Schnufferle had for some time been jumping up on Lauri and licking his hands. As the children were now going away again and had stepped outside, Schnufferle ran with them and did not want to leave his friend at all.

"Well, go too," said the Major's wife, "but at the gate send him back, so that he won't run with you any farther."

When they reached the gate Schnufferle wanted to continue his demonstrations of affec-

tion and Lauri stroked him along his whole back again and again and said caressingly:

"You good Schnufferle, do you want to come with me? Do you want to go home with me?"

But Amei, who had accompanied them also to the gate, said decidedly:

"No, be done at once, Lauri, we must go in, it is already quite dark. Come quickly with me, Schnufferle, come home with me at once!"

Lauri let Schnufferle go, and he came wagging his tail quite obediently to Amei; he had understood that the command was in earnest.

"Good-night, Lauri, come to school again on Monday!" called Amei after her friend.

"Good-night, Amei; yes, if there's nothing to prevent, I will surely come," he called back, and shut the big iron gate behind him.

"The little dog seems to like you, he knows you very well," said a voice close to Lauri.

He jumped. In the darkness he hadn't noticed that any one was near. It was the Hun. He was standing close to the wall and he must have watched Schnufferle's leave-taking.

"Yes," said Lauri, "I have known Schnufferle well for a long time."

“Well, well, I will go a few steps with you,” said the Hun. “To-morrow is Sunday; how would it be if in the afternoon we should try the boat a little while, that you could have? It has occurred to me how I could perhaps help you to get it. Later you could earn something handsome with it. Since you can sail so well strangers would always engage you to go out on the lake. But you must naturally do me a little favor in return.”

Lauri's eyes blazed with delighted surprise. His greatest wish suddenly lay before him quite easily attainable.

“Yes, that I will surely do. Only tell me what it is. I will do everything gladly for you, whatever it may be,” asserted Lauri with eyes shining in the darkness. “Only tell me right away what, and I will do everything on the spot.”

“Then to-morrow on the lake we will talk about it,” said the Hun. “Then we shall have time to plan everything right. Now go home, but you needn't speak just yet about what we are going to do together; it is better that you should keep it to yourself, or something might happen to prevent.”



"Yes, I will surely do so," asserted Lauri, for it didn't seem to him desirable to have anything prevent. He had now reached his father's house. The Hun went hurriedly on his way.

### III

#### A STRANGE STORY

SOMETHING must have happened, for Lauri did not come to school on Monday, or on Tuesday either. On Wednesday morning also when Amei waited until the last moment in vain under the nut-tree for him, she told her mother about the matter, for she felt badly that her friend should belong to the irregular scholars as the teacher called them.

"Doesn't the teacher want to know where he is?" asked her mother.

"Of course, but then Lauri says his father needed him for work," replied Amei. "But you know, Mother, he doesn't mean to tell a lie," she added hurriedly; "he thinks he can say so because it is a good excuse and perhaps often it is true."

"An excuse which is not true is a lie, Amei, you mustn't confuse them!" said her mother a little reprovingly, "and if Lauri does so, he is to be pitied and you must not imitate him."

"Yes, but he is not to blame," said Amei, who was nearly in tears, "he must be told about it or else he will not know it right."

"And if no one else tells him, the pastor tells him in Sunday School; that I know, and he surely knows it too," the mother added.

"But he almost never goes. They don't send him and he doesn't even go home of his own accord. With Lauri it is not at all as with us, Mother. If only Lauri lived with us, you would tell him what he ought and what he ought not to do, then everything would go quite differently with him," said Amei.

A few days later, when Frau Barrell was hurrying home much later than usual from Vivis, Frau Linott came running after her.

"You are running as if there was a fire," she called to her neighbor. "If you were not in such a terrible hurry I would come along with you."

Frau Barrell retarded her steps somewhat.

"It really seems to me as if the ground was

burning under my feet, when I am so late on the way," she replied now that Frau Linott was walking by her side. "I am always thinking something may have gone wrong at home. My husband has to work until late, then my little girl is alone and she is still young. With you there are still younger ones to care for and the older ones besides. You must dislike to come home so late as to-day."

"I come home now every day like this," replied Frau Linott, "but I really don't know any such worry as you have. I shouldn't get far if I did. I took the place in the big shop in Vivis, which brings me fine pay. But it is a position of trust and I have to be there from morning until night, and can never get away earlier than to-day. But I have arranged everything well at home, old Brisi cooks for me at noon and looks after the children some besides. I saw that Lauri would be of no help to me for them; he is no use, he is always sailing, and nobody knows where he goes all the time."

"I should think it would be better if you knew something about where he is and where he is not," said Frau Barrell. "The most important

thing is surely for us to be concerned about our children and care what becomes of them. If we don't do that nobody will do it for us."

"What else do I do then?" fired up Frau Linott. "Isn't it for my children that I am spending all my strength, so that later on they may have a little more comfort than we have had until now? Then I really hope to be able to share a little with them! Can any one care better for their children? I don't know how, and if I cannot look after them in every smallest matter, I do better than many another mother who thinks how much she is accomplishing by running after them the whole day, like an old hen after her chickens."

"I think it is no small matter to know what our children are doing and where they go about," said Frau Barrell, also in an excited tone, "and I think too a little oversight at the present time would be more beneficial for Lauri than a more luxurious life in the future."

Frau Linott shrugged her shoulders. "Every one according to his own opinion. Wish you good night!" Whereupon she went on her way to her house.

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At this time there was great excitement at the Major's. For a good while repairs had been needed in the house and these the Major had now undertaken, and in order that the disturbance might not be of long duration, he had immediately engaged a large number of workmen, to whom at every moment instructions of every sort had to be given. In the midst of this unusual commotion in the house and on the estate, a letter had come to the Major summoning him to Geneva for several days on account of business which allowed no postponement.

"I will take the night train at once," the Major had decided, "so I shall gain the hours for travelling and can be back again in three or four days. Until then nothing in particular will happen. If anything should come up among the workmen which you cannot decide, the people can do something else meanwhile; it will not be long, three days I shall need at all events, you can tell them that."

The Major's wife had a great many questions to ask, and ran back and forth to see that everything was made right for her husband's journey.

Then all was ready for his departure. The carriage drove up, the Major stepped in.

All day long Schnufferle had seemed more excited than he ever had before. He was constantly restless, running around in the whole house, jumped up at the open windows and had barked down at the workmen in great rage. Then he behaved as if he was driven to despair. He howled quite piteously when the Major took leave of his wife and when he was getting into the carriage, Schnufferle bit his trousers and tried to hold him back. The little dog had never acted so before.

"Don't be so unreasonable, Schnufferle," said his master, while he kindly pushed away the little dog. "Your mistress is staying with you, and you must watch over her well until I return." Then the Major drove away.

Schnufferle growled and whined for a long time on his cushion beside his mistress's bed, after she had lain down to rest, and from time to time spoke a soothing word to him. Early the next morning Schnufferle began his fussing again, which increased to a real howl of distress, whenever he saw one of the workmen enter the house.



In the afternoon the Major's wife received a visit from the ladies of a neighboring estate, who stayed with her until late in the evening.

"It is a good thing that Schnufferle was finally quiet, and did not keep on making his wretched howling when the ladies were here," she said to the maid as she was serving the supper. "Where is he now? He doesn't usually stay away until this time."

"He will surely come soon," replied the maid; "he must be still in the garden, he never is away when Madame goes to bed."

But to-night Schnufferle stayed out. This did not seem right to the Major's wife. She went herself through the courtyard and the garden and all through the estate, even up to the vineyard and called Schnufferle kindly to come to her. He did not come. Then she sent the maid out again to enquire of the neighbors, if they knew anything about the little dog. The man servant had to hunt through the whole estate again to see if Schnufferle was lying anywhere asleep, although this was not his custom. The man found no sign of the little creature, and the maid brought word that one of the neighbors had

already gone to sleep, and the others had not seen Schnufferle all day long. For to-day nothing more was to be done. To-morrow the Major's wife would send everywhere to look for her faithful dog. Could perhaps some one have desired to get possession of the devoted little creature? He would soon betray the unlawful owner with his noise and be allowed to go free again, the lady hoped, for she knew very well that he would not be quieted by the best tit-bits away from her.

Then she went to bed. If Schnufferle should bark in the night she would hear it, and could quickly ring the service bell, so that he would be let in. Then the Major's wife fell asleep. But as she kept thinking as she went to sleep that she would soon be wakened, so it happened. She was wakened by a strange noise, exactly as if some one was closing her chamber door. This was surely not possible; perhaps she had dreamed it, or had Schnufferle rattled her door?

"Schnufferle," she called, "is that you?" She heard no more sound. She went to sleep again. Again she was wakened by a strange noise. Was it Schnufferle, who had scratched at

her door? How had he come home? But Schnufferle knew all the loopholes in the house; he might really have got in somewhere. Again she heard the peculiar scratching sound, but it seemed as if it came from the next room, her husband's room. The Major's wife sat up, in order to be fully awake; she was not quite clear about what she had heard in her sleep and what she had heard when awake. Everything was still, perfectly still, and the night very dark. Suddenly the bell at the gate rang so loud that she shuddered, and at the same moment she heard distinctly in the next room a clinking object fall to the floor. What was it? Nobody could be in her husband's room, and who would want to get into the house in the middle of the night? She quickly threw on her bath robe and went to the door. Loud voices sounded on the stairs; was that not her husband's voice? She opened the door.

"Don't be frightened," the Major called to her, as he came up and then stepped into her room. "The affair in Geneva will last for some time, and cannot be concluded for several weeks; then I shall have to be away for a longer while.

On account of the large number of workmen I didn't want to leave you alone, or I should not have returned until to-morrow noon, that is why I am back so early. Why doesn't Schnufferle welcome me? It is the first time that he has failed to herald an arrival or a departure with his deafening noise."

"And the first time since he belonged to me that the little watch dog has not gone to sleep by my bed," added the Major's wife. "He must have run away or he has been stolen from me."

"Let us hope that he has not gone wandering off," said the Major; "to-morrow we shall find him. Now lie down to sleep again, and I will do the same; there are still several fine hours for sleep before morning. But why did you lock this door?" he asked, when he could not enter his room as usual.

"I have never locked it," replied his wife decidedly; "you must have done it from the inside before you went away. But no, that is not possible; I was in there to-day."

The Major went out in order to go into his room from the hall.

“What has happened? I cannot get in there either,” he called back.

His wife came along.

“I have been through there twice to-day; it is not possible that it is locked,” she said and tried herself to open the door. The key stuck in the lock, but it was impossible to open it, the door must have been bolted inside.

“Who is in there?” called the Major in a thundering voice. All remained still. “Johann must be called, he must still be awake for he just now had to open the gate for me,” said the Major. “There is no other entrance into the room, except through the balcony door. If some one is hiding in there, there is no way for him to get out except by the balcony; that is out of the question; nobody could jump down from there.”

The maid had called Johann. The Major went downstairs.

“The very long ladder must be brought, in order to reach the balcony,” he said. “We will both climb up together.” On the back side of the house a shorter ladder, which the workmen had used in the daytime, was still standing. “If this was not standing as far away from the window

as from the balcony, I should think somebody had climbed up by it," said the Major to Johann, as he was bringing the long ladder, "but nobody would undertake such a jump or climbing feat."

Johann now mounted the ladder, the Major behind him.

"The branches of the vines on the balcony are all torn and broken away here, it looks badly," said the man when he had reached the balcony.

Then the Major came up and saw the destruction.

"Some one has either climbed up or down, that is clear," he said.

The balcony door was standing open.

"A pane of glass is broken," said Johann who was throwing the light of his bright lantern everywhere. In the anteroom as well as on the balcony little flower tables and light red chairs were standing all around, everything was still. The door into the Major's room was standing wide open. He stepped in, Johann right behind him with the lantern. In the large room they first lighted up every corner; there was nobody there. The lock of the iron safe was open, and on the floor lay a chisel, a little farther away lay



a strangely shaped key. The Major tried to see what had been opened and what remained closed there. Then he ordered Johann to take away the ladder, and also the shorter one standing there. Then he went back to his wife who was anxiously waiting for him, for she did not know what might have happened to him during his investigation.

“Well, now it is all clear to me, the affair is at an end, so you don’t need to be troubled,” he said soothingly. “There was very decidedly a thief here in the next room to you and I thank God that the creature closed your door and did not open it. What a fright he saved you! He wanted to be perfectly safe so he bolted all the doors. He must have been disturbed soon at his work. He was really able to open the outside lock of the iron safe and get away with some money, but there wasn’t much there. It might have turned out very much worse, if he had not been disturbed. He must have gone in haste, not to have taken his chisel with him, and a key is left. I surmise that the fellow is something of a locksmith.”

“Now I understand the strange noise in your

room," said his wife breathing more freely. "So is there no one in your room and no more danger for you there? I say, God be praised that it is all over. But how could only one man get in here? The house is always locked as soon as night comes, even the gate."

"It must have been a very bold man; any other would never have dared. Only see," explained the Major pointing to the window, "from a ladder placed by the workmen low down and at a distance from the balcony, the man must have got up there with a leap such as only tigers make, or climbing like a gorilla. I am only glad that the fellow has gone and we shall have nothing more to do with him."

"Do you suppose it was one of the workmen? Haven't you thought of that too?" asked the Major's wife.

It really had been the Major's first thought, but it seemed to him very unlikely so he tried to refute it. That such a man should henceforth stay around the house and even indoors, was an unbearable thought, and yet how should the guilty one be found out from among such a crowd and be sent away?

“No, no, surely none of them could be so bold,” said the Major decidedly, as if to reassure himself. First of all suspicion would fall on all the workmen about the house, and an investigation would have to be made.”

Sleep had departed for the Major as well as his wife. In spite of all that had happened day came more quickly than they had expected. Before everything else the Major's wife ordered search to be made for Schnufferle and enquiry be made for him in the whole neighborhood, especially at the Linotts', if the little dog had not followed the boy he knew so well. All the workmen too must be asked when and where they had last seen the dog. They all knew him so well, for his furious barking must have been heard by them all as they were so near the day before. Nobody in the whole vicinity, nobody knew anything about the little creature that the people knew so well; all had seen him last in the company of his mistress. So reported Johann as he returned home and added that over at Linotts' something much worse had happened for they had lost a boy. They were hunting everywhere for Lauri, and they had asked if he knew any-

thing about him. He only knew for certain that he had seen him somewhere the day before; he would surely come home again, he thought. In spite of all search nothing was seen of Schnufferle that day nor for a whole week long.

“If I only knew that he was dead and not lying somewhere suffering or ill treated,” said the Major’s wife often. “I could really be consoled for the loss if I knew poor Schnufferle was only at rest.”

When the builder heard of the occurrence in the Major’s house, he insisted upon an investigation among his men. The workmen could all prove that they had spent that night quietly in their beds. So the occurrence while it was talked about long enough by all the people, was dropped and forgotten, and Schnufferle’s disappearance was not thought about any longer, and even the Major’s wife forgot her loss in another which went more to her heart. Lauri did not appear again, and three weeks had passed since the day he disappeared. His father and mother had seen him last on the morning of the day preceding the night of terrible excitement at the Major’s house, when Lauri, well and lively, had been present at

the family breakfast. Then his father had gone to work in the vineyard, taking his dinner with him. His mother went down to Vivis. In the evening when both were at home again no one was surprised because Lauri was not there, for really he was not usually there. The father went to bed. The mother hastily sewed some holes together, so that her children would not be seen in rags. Then she too came to bed. She went to open a little window at the back of the house. "He can creep in there, when he comes home," she said to herself. "I will not wait any longer." Then she went to sleep. Lauri did not come home.

"First look for the boy before you go away; he must be spoken to," the father had ordered, before he went to his work. His wife really wanted herself to know where Lauri was.

"What does he always find to do?" she said, much excited, when she ran over to the neighbors' houses to look for him. He was nowhere to be found. Then she had to go to her work down in Vivis; it couldn't be helped, as she was expected. She could enquire about him there, also. From the people who knew him she heard down there

that they had usually seen the boy by the lake or on the lake at all hours of the day. Something could have really happened to him there, especially when he stayed out so late as he often did. But Frau Linott could not believe this; anything like that could not possibly have happened to him. The boy would surely come back. But he did not come. The Major's wife did all that she could to help find Lauri, and she decidedly hoped he had only gone roving as he sometimes did in his complete freedom; but there was no sign of him to be found. She heard also how he had often been seen, especially of late, on the lake, many times even in storms and wind and also very late in the evening. Had poor Lauri really met some misfortune? She had to talk with her husband again and again about it and ask what she could do further to find the lost boy.

For Amei Lauri's disappearance was such a frightful happening that she became quite ill over it. For the first few days she was always perfectly sure that he would come back for it seemed to her wholly impossible that Lauri would never be there again. But now he did not come, not at all, and everybody was talking about drowning;



then the child would become very quiet and thoughtful and sad, as she had never been in her life before.

With her eyes on the ground she went about so silently that nobody recognized merry Amei in the child. When the Major's wife met her in the courtyard, she placed her hand under her chin and lifted up her head. "Look at me happily once more, Amei. What is the matter with you?" she then said as friendly as ever, but Amei could not look as happy as usual.

"You have grown so thin and where are your rosy cheeks?" continued the Major's wife. "It is nothing, Amei; as soon as I go to the mountains you shall go with me; that will do you good."

"Mother," said Amei one evening after she had sat for some time silent in her corner, "do you think, Mother, if I pray right the dear Lord can still make it so that what people say is not true?"

Her mother looked up in surprise. "Everything is really possible to the dear Lord, but how did you come to have such thoughts, Amei?" she asked.

“From distress, because I can’t help thinking all the time about Lauri,” said the child. “They all keep saying he is drowned, but Mother, do you think that the dear Lord can still make it so that he isn’t drowned? Oh, somebody may have come to help him.” Amei then broke into loud weeping.

“You do exactly right to pray for Lauri,” said her mother soothingly. “Only be comforted, Amei, the dear Lord can come to Lauri’s aid anywhere he may be, and see what good fortune it is that we can always in our greatest distress call upon our Father in Heaven, who can help where man can do nothing more.”

“If only Lauri really knew that,” said Amei, drying her eyes. “Perhaps the water only carried him away so that he did not drown, but perhaps is all alone, where he doesn’t know the way. If he only really knew that he could pray to the dear Lord and that He would hear him, then poor Lauri would not be so alone.”

Amei could not at all imagine that Lauri was really dead and never would be found again, and her mother had said that the dear Lord could come to his help wherever he might be. Now

she would not cease to pray for him that he would yet do this for Lauri.

#### IV

##### WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN ANOTHER PLACE

ON the high rocky mountain above the Furka Pass where the slope is still green and bordered with fir trees and birches, stood the little wooden house belonging to the well-known Vincent of good reputation, who for many years climbed around on all the mountain heights as guide with strangers, and was known in the whole region by that name. Now he had retired and took care of his little home, his two goats and bit of land. His wife, Margaret, who was still vigorous, managed her share of the work in the best order, for she had always loved order and now had more time to maintain it everywhere than in the years when she looked after house and barn alone and had to work the little field besides, when her husband was occupied with his work. The only child she had to bring up was her whole

delight and no time was too early or too late to care for his needs. The child grew to be a sturdy lad, who was now spending his summer up on the green mountain pasture, where he had taken charge of a dairy.

Vincent had just stepped out of his goat-shed, washed his hands and his face at a little spring in the woods, for his wife was very particular about cleanliness. Then he went into the house and into the room where supper was waiting. It looked simple but very inviting in the room, and what was on the table would have made many a one want to sit down and share it. Next the big pitcher full of foaming milk lay the round loaf of black bread and a fresh golden yellow ball of butter.

"Come, try a piece of it, Vincent," said his wife seating herself beside him on the bench behind the table. "It is good of him to want to have us know what fine butter he makes. We can really be glad that he is doing so well in his dairy. But it is truly very empty here with us, exactly as if everything was dead, since the boy went away."

"You have said that already three times to-

day," remarked Vincent drily; "now say something new."

"Bah, we speak out what is uppermost in our minds and with me that I have the boy no longer with me, is uppermost. There are not many who would make such a gap as he does. Who is outside?" the wife suddenly broke off and called out in a loud voice to the door.

"Can I sleep here in your hay?" asked a timid voice, while the door was half opened.

"No, no," Vincent called out, "only shut the door again. It must be one of those tramps who wander over the mountain and in the haylofts, wherever they are allowed, smoke their pipes and set everything on fire."

The door was quickly closed again.

"That may be," said his wife, "but the voice was not like a tramp's. I will just see who it was."

She opened the little window.

A boy in ragged clothes was creeping away from the house; he was weeping, but she could not see that.

"Come back, come back again," she called kindly out of the window; "you must have some-

thing to eat. It is quite a young boy, Vincent," she said back into the room, "he could not set any one's house on fire."

The boy turned around, quickly wiped his tears away and came back.

The woman had cut a good slice of black bread, and spread a little butter on it. She went towards him.

"There, take that," she said, giving the boy the piece of bread; "you must really have come a long way, to gather the dust lying on you. Where did you come from?"

"From down below," replied the boy, pointing down the road. "Thank you very much."

Then he bit with such eagerness into his piece of bread that the woman thought: "He needed it."

"And where are you going all alone so? Have you no parents?" she asked again.

"Yes, to be sure, but I must go on further until I find work," answered the boy a little hesitatingly.

"Are you the oldest, and have you many brothers and sisters and your father little work? It really must be so," said the woman, explaining



the matter to herself. "You are not able to do much work yet, and up here especially there isn't much for such a boy to do; there are no farms as there are down in the valley where there is much growing and a good deal of work in the field and pasture and with the fruit. You would do better to go down into the valley again, to the lake."

Then such a sad expression came over the boy's face that it went straight to the woman's heart. Still so young and already such an expression of trouble, she thought. He could not finish the bread, for which he had shown such longing. He held it in his hand and looked pale and troubled at the woman.

"I think you mustn't go back right away; we'll see if you can spend the night here; only eat your bread. Come, sit here and finish it," she said, pointing to the little bench by the house, for she was still standing with the boy in front of the door. Then she went back to her husband. She had soon persuaded him to let the boy sleep in the hay in the loft next the house, and also that he could stay the following day; there were all sorts of little tasks they could easily use him for.

Then she came out again. "Come with me; you can sleep here," she said leading the boy over to the hayloft, "but don't look so sad any longer. See, there it is soft and still smells so good. You can lie down there," she continued, when she had opened the door and climbed up to show the boy his place. "So come now, and in the morning you can sleep as long as you like; you must be very tired. So sleep well—what is your name? I must be able to call you by your name."

"Lauri," was the low answer. It seemed as if Lauri hardly dared to speak his name.

"Don't be so shy; you are under a friendly roof," said the woman, patting the boy kindly on the shoulder; "to-morrow you will have more courage."

The following morning Vincent and his wife had taken their breakfast in a quiet way, and each had gone to perform their peaceful tasks. First Margaret wanted to look after the boy who had not as yet shown himself. She went over and climbed up to the hayloft. There the boy lay still in deep sleep. She looked at the young child-

ish face. A deep frown lay on his forehead, as if some great trouble had drawn it together.

"He has surely been treated very hard to show trouble in his forehead so early," she said to herself, and a deep sympathy for the wandering boy seized her. "Perhaps he has no mother, we must be kind to him," and with these thoughts she laid her hand very kindly on his.

Lauri jumped up in affright and stared at the woman.

"Why are you so frightened? I feel kindly towards you, only come with me now," said Margaret in a friendly way. "Did you think I would hurt you?"

"No, but I dreamed a little dog jumped up on me and licked my hand," replied Lauri and kept on gazing before him as if frightened.

"That surely was nothing so frightful," said the woman. "Come with me; perhaps from hunger and running so much you are a little bewildered."

Then she took the boy along with her, and placed before him a bowl of milk and generous piece of bread besides.

Lauri swallowed it all in silence and did not look up a single time from the table.

Margaret watched him attentively. She had seen many children who had been ill-treated, but as soon as they came under friendly care they were cheered and gave one friendly looks. Perhaps the boy had received bad treatment for too long and needed time to come out of his frightened condition. He had something about him which pleased the woman. If he would smooth out the deep frown, he would really look quite charming with his blue eyes, she thought. She silently proposed to keep the boy with her a few days, for it seemed to her too sad that he should immediately start out on the road again and perhaps receive harsh treatment here and there from people. In time he would really thaw out, she thought.

"Come, you can help me a little," she said, when he had finished his breakfast. "I really think you would rather stay a day or two with us than to go on again right away, without knowing exactly where."

"Yes," replied Lauri, but not the least glimmer of pleasure was to be seen in his face.

Margaret went with him to the garden where he could pull up the weeds, while she had something to regulate and clear away in the little flower beds, and then worked around in the vegetable garden next. Now and then she asked Lauri a question and received only a yes or no in reply. Nothing further than that came. Then she watched the boy again, to see how he did his work. He did not look up from it, he kept pulling the weeds out of the ground without stopping, but without zest, without life, doing his work like a little old man, because something had to be done, but quite indifferent to what it was. What was the matter with the boy? She felt a deep pity for him. Was no happy childlike mind to be restored to him? Had he perhaps never had one? She had to think of her own boy, and how different he was when he worked so beside her. For a quarter of an hour he would pull the weeds as eagerly as if they must all come out of the ground at once; then suddenly he would lift his head in the air and look at the birds and the trees and clouds, and begin to whistle and sing until the echo was awakened in all the mountains and sang back, and suddenly the boy went back

to his work and threw whole heaps of weeds on top of each other. Yes, there was quite a different nature in Vizli!

Suddenly a thought came to Margaret:

“Yes, surely, that might help the poor boy,” she said to herself with considerable satisfaction, “and I will help him, and I will do all in my power for him.”

Later Margaret went into the kitchen, and left the boy to his work. From the kitchen window she could observe him well and did so.

He went right on with his work as before, but now that he was alone, he gave a deep sigh from time to time. Margaret heard him distinctly from her open window.

When Vincent came in to his dinner, Lauri was also called to the table.

“Come, sit beside me,” said Margaret kindly to him, “and God’s blessing for you.”

Lauri did not look up, and sat down without speaking.

“You don’t need to look scornfully at your plate full of good vegetable soup as if it was filled with sorrel,” then said Vincent sharply,



“ thank the good Lord for it and eat it with gladness, that is better.”

Lauri said nothing and held his head a little closer to his plate.

“ Where will you go, when you leave here to-morrow? ” asked Vincent after a while.

“ Farther on,” answered Lauri timidly.

“ Yes, I believe that! Can he be a runaway? ” murmured Vincent.

When they rose from the table, Margaret sent the boy to the garden again to his weeding. He would not finish that until evening and she had work to do in the house.

But before Vincent returned in the evening, she called Lauri in, gave him his supper and told him to go to sleep at once, and that she would waken him early in the morning. Then she arranged the table so that everything looked the same as usual and sat down on the bench to wait for her husband. She wanted to keep him in good humor.

When Vincent came in he looked around a little to see if he was alone with his wife. He was pleased with the way things looked, and seated himself comfortably at his table.

"Well, has the boy gone again?" he said after a while.

"No, he is lying in the hay and asleep," replied his wife. "I wanted to talk with you alone. I have something in mind, Vincent."

"You often have that," asserted her husband, "but nothing about the boy; he is either very sly or half-witted; there is nothing to be done with him."

"But exactly we must have pity when so young a boy has come to such a pass. I only wonder what has happened to him. Usually when one is kind and friendly with children, they are happy again, even if they have received bad treatment, but not so with him, and yet he doesn't look like one who has no feeling. I don't know what it is, but I know surely that if we let the boy go and he comes into worse hands than he must have already been in, he must be lost in poverty or wickedness. Just think if our Vizli had to wander around on the road and nobody would befriend him."

"What have you then in mind for the boy?" Vincent interrupted, bending forward. "Such

a boy must have some work and we have none for him."

"That is exactly what I have been thinking, or I should be very glad to keep him," said Margaret frankly, for in spite of his silent sad ways Lauri had won her heart. "But I have a mind to take him up to Vizli; he can make good use of such a boy, I know, and up there this poor Lauri will become all right again and be lively and talkative. With the healthful work in the pasture and always with happy Vizli the boy will come to be all right."

"How the women always contrive," said Vincent half in vexation, half in admiration. "It is true that the boy could have nothing better than to be up there. Whether Vizli needs any one is not certain, but you can suggest it to him. How long will it take you?"

"I will go early to-morrow morning and by evening I shall be back home," replied Margaret quickly. "You can meet me at the foot of the pasture. Vizli can come down with me as far as that. So you will be sure that I am coming home."

This prospect appeased the ill-nature which

was rising in Vincent because his wife should make such a fuss, as he called it, over the boy. He said at once that he would come for her, but she must be down promptly at seven o'clock.

At five o'clock the next morning Margaret shook Lauri with all her strength, for he could hardly wake up. For the first time, under the kind woman's protection sleep had come over Lauri with double power, for in the last three weeks distress and fear had always chased it from his eyes. But at last he was awake, and then went quickly ahead, first for his morning milk and then at once on the journey. It was a brilliant morning. Rosy clouds floated over the sky, for the sun was rising behind the mountains. The birds sang louder and louder, the snow-covered mountain tops began to shine like pure gold, now it was up; on all the green heights and all the dark tops of the fir-trees its light shone like gold.

"See, see there, Lauri, how wonderfully the white flowers shine on the great rocks. Do you see how beautiful they are? It looks as if fresh snow had fallen there, but they are flowers." Lauri looked as if spellbound at the rocks.

Suddenly tears ran down his cheeks; he quickly wiped them away.

"Are they narcissus blossoms?" he asked then.

"No, no, there are no narcissus flowers there," said Margaret. "They are white pinks. Don't you think they are lovely?"

Although Lauri had tried quickly and secretly to wipe away his tears, Margaret had seen them.

"What a strange boy this Lauri is," she thought to herself. "If I could have shown my Vizli all the flowers in the world, they would not all together have made him weep; he would rather have shouted so loud, that he could be heard from here to the Gotthard."

For a long while she went on buried in her thoughts, then she said:

"Lauri, now I will tell you where we are going. Do you see the green pasture up there and the brown hut in the middle of it? My son, the cowherd, is there. We are going to him. You can stay for a while with him and help him in all sorts of ways. It will be good for you. Would you like to go up there?"

"Yes," said Lauri, without looking up.

"Well, then be a little happy, now it is going

to be fine for you," said Margaret encouragingly, while she took the boy kindly by the hand.

"I cannot," he brought out in a low voice.

Then they began to climb. That it would become steeper and steeper until the pasture was reached could be plainly seen. Margaret said nothing more; she climbed on steadily. Lauri followed after in her footsteps. Finally they reached the last height.

"Look there, I can already recognize Vizli," said his mother, her face beaming with delight.

"See, he is just coming out of the hut."

The woman climbed on with new zest, so fast that Lauri had to run hard to keep up with her. Then the young cowboy recognized his mother. He gave a loud cry of delight and came running to meet her.

Vizli was not as yet nineteen years old, but grown strong and broad, and with his clear, merry eyes, fresh red and white face and strong round arms, his sleeves rolled far back he looked full of life and health.

"Good morning, Mother!" he called in great glee. "Of all people you have had my best thoughts! Only last evening I thought if only



I could tell Mother this and that, and now you are really here! Nothing better could have possibly come into your mind."

"I was glad to come too, Vizli," said his mother, regarding her son with satisfaction. "The time has never seemed so long to me as since you went away. To-day I had a good reason for coming for I am bringing a boy here with me. You said you would often be glad to have a helping hand. Come, Lauri, speak to the cowherd, he is my son."

Lauri held out his hand and greeted him, but immediately looked down on the ground again.

"Well, it is right that you have come and up here you can open your eyes," said Vizli. "Up here there is nobody to be afraid of. Now come, Mother, come into the hut, I have just finished with the cheese, which is lucky; I only have to give it the last stirring."

"Just let me rest, let me rest. I must first get my breath a little," said Margaret, stepping into the hut and seating herself on the clean scrubbed stool by the table, while she beckoned to Lauri to sit down on the little three-legged stool. Vizli once more put his bare arm into the kettle and stirred

the solidifying white curd with all his might. Meanwhile his mother looked around in the hut and was silently delighted to see how clean Vizli kept his milk utensils and all his pots and the beautiful order in the whole hut. In spite of his work Vizli saw very well where his mother's eyes roved.

“Yes, surely, Mother, even if you are not here, I keep good order; you wouldn't have thought so,” he said smiling. “You taught me neatness when I was a little boy, and now I am not pleased myself with anything else.”

After a little while when Vizli had finished his work he dried his arm the whole length with the clean towel hanging on a nail. Then he came to his mother, in order to greet her again and very heartily and to make her welcome in his hut. The pleasure he felt over it smiled out of his whole face.

“Now let us eat, Mother,” he said then, “but this time you haven't done the cooking but I have. Now we will see how you like it.”

Then he brought out a plate with snow-white whey on it, placed a fresh bright yellow ball of butter beside it and last came on the table the

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fresh cheese, which was as white as if a hand had never touched it. It all looked so clean and appetizing that his mother partook of it with real pleasure, and the praise she bestowed upon her son for his cooking came right from her heart.

“Really the fresh baked bread you brought with you goes well with it, Mother,” said Vizli taking a deep bite into his big slice. “You only ought to know how glad I am when the herdsman brings me back a loaf from you when he goes down. I don’t always have it so good, for when I let some one else bring it up, it is sour. Oftentimes I have nothing left but hard crusts, but I put them in hot buttermilk, and then I can eat them.”

Then his mother wanted Vizli to know how glad she would be to send him one of the round loaves she baked herself if she could, but the herdsman came very seldom and no one went up except him. She would like to send Vizli other things also. She had brought with her now some which she had made for him and Vizli had to look at them and tell her what he could make the best use of the next time she sent to him. So the two had so much to talk about and to discuss

that the hours passed they knew not how and it was five o'clock before they were aware of it.

"Now it is well that the boy is here," said Vizli when his mother reminded him that it was time to start. "I had entirely forgotten him. I haven't heard him say a word yet."

"Come in, boy," he called out at the open door to Lauri who was sitting outside on the bench.

"You must do what I tell you," he continued when Lauri was standing before him. "You don't look stupid, but a little stubborn. I don't really know what to make of you."

"He will do all right what you tell him," remarked his mother. "He is still a little shy. He will really be different when he feels at home with you, Vizli, you will see that."

"Yes, let us hope so. Now pay attention," continued Vizli; "in an hour the milker will come with the milk; he knows already where to put it, but you must be here and pay attention to what he has to say to tell me. There are many things about the cows and the milk, so don't forget what he says and tell him I have only gone a little way with my mother. If he has anything special, he must wait. Well, that is all, but you

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don't need to make such a long face about it, as if I had given you bad news. Now let us go, Mother."

Margaret gave the boy her hand. "Now good-bye, Lauri," she said kindly. "It is surely going to be fine for you here if only you are contented; up here you will have a good time."

Lauri did not look at all like it. He held the offered hand fast and looked up sadly at the woman. It seemed as if he wanted to say something, but he had to swallow as if he was choking. He kept on holding her hand firmly. At last in a husky voice came out:

"I thank you many times for all your kindness," then he ran quickly away and wiped his eyes. Margaret was very much moved. She thought the boy must really have more feeling than one would suppose from his short answers and his strange shy manner. She would recommend him highly to Vizli and tell him he must keep him for some time even if he would prefer some one else. Otherwise evil would surely overtake the boy and one ought to have pity for him. In this way she talked to her son, while they were on the way together and Vizli promised his

mother what she desired. Then she had to listen attentively to all that he had still to tell her, about everything that he did, and how he managed, how well his dairy worked, and how he thought of improving his hut with still better utensils. Vizli had been accustomed from a little boy to talk everything over with his mother, for she had always shared everything with him and with the greatest sympathy entered into everything he did even if it was only a beetle that he had caught.

When they reached the foot of the pasture the father was standing there. He had come on time and was pacing back and forth with longer and longer strides, for he did not feel sure that the mother would keep her word; Vizli might have persuaded her to remain up there with him. So he was very much pleased when the two came along and promised his son at once to come up to him soon and to bring his mother again. When the old people had started homewards, Vizli made his way, singing and whistling, back up the mountain.

Lauri was sitting motionless on the bench in front of the hut and staring on the ground, as if



he were surrounded by prison walls which he dared not look at. Night had come, but no darkness lay on the pasture. The sky was studded with a thousand sparkling stars, and the half full moon shone golden over the hut and the green place in front of it. Vizli had just come up. He stood still and looked around him. Suddenly he broke forth into such a terrible yodelling for joy that Lauri shuddered and trembled. From the mountains opposite two loud echoes shouted across; one came from the reëcho to the rocks, the other from the cowherd opposite, who gave a merry answer.

Then Vizli turned around: "Lift your head up to the sky, boy, and don't gaze into the ground like a badger!" he called to Lauri. "Don't you see how beautiful it is? Have you never looked up when all the mountains shine with gold and fire, when the sun has gone down?"

"No," answered Lauri.

"Oh, you earth-choked mole you! I only wonder where you came from!" exclaimed Vizli. "Up here you will be quite different. Now come and sing with me the evening hymn up to

Heaven; afterwards go to sleep in the hay. Can you sing an evening song?"

Lauri shook his head.

"Then sing what I sing with me."

Vizli sat down beside him on the bench, folded his hands, and sang in a loud voice his evening song.

"You didn't sing with me," said Vizli, when he had ended and rose. "You must learn that, you must sing it too. Now go into the hay."

## V

### ANGUISH STILL, ON THE MOUNTAIN PASTURE

ABOUT five o'clock the next morning, Lauri got such a shaking that he jumped up in fright.

"There is nothing to frighten you," said Vizli, who had shaken him; "up here the sun rises early, then we must be out; it is already up. Hurry and come!"

When Lauri came out, Vizli was sitting on his bench all golden in the morning sunlight.

"Come here for our morning song!" he called to Lauri. "Now sing with me! In the morn-

ing we sing: 'Dear Lord, we thank Thee that we have lived to see the light.' "

Vizli sang loud and eagerly through his song; Lauri did not open his mouth.

"Why didn't you sing with me this time?" said Vizli reproachfully, when he had ended.

"I cannot," answered Lauri.

"Of course you can, everybody can sing. To-day I will let you off, but to-morrow take care, if you do not open your mouth!"

Vizli shook his forefinger threateningly. He rose and then led Lauri to the clear bubbling spring not far from the hut. Here he had to get water and carry it to the hut. The cowherd explained to him that this would be his chief duty. Then he showed him all sorts of chores which he had to perform while Vizli was occupied with his cheese-making in the big kettle and disliked to keep leaving his work. To-day he did not have to do this for Lauri accomplished everything exactly as it had been explained to him and quite intelligently performed here and there little tasks for his master which he had not been told to do, and which helped the cowherd very much. Lauri had always filled his water-

pail and brought it back so quickly that Vizli could go on with his work without interruption; this pleased him very much. At noon he sat down well satisfied at the table and called the boy to him.

How delighted in other days Lauri would have been to eat his piece of bread, on which Vizli first laid a thick piece of butter and then pressed it flat with his thumb, and after that placed a good slice of the fine white cheese on it. Lauri ate his fine dinner well, but not like one to whom it tastes good. Meanwhile he kept bringing out a little sigh.

In the afternoon the cowherd had different work. There came butter-making and Lauri had to run to and fro a great deal. Finally he had to learn how to scrub all the milk vessels as clean as Vizli could desire.

"Now it is time to rest," Vizli said after the milker had brought in the milk and arranged it and then put everything in order for the following morning. "Now we will sit in front of the hut and enjoy ourselves. Do you see how it blazes and lights up outside? The sun is going to set."

Vizli went out and first looked all around, yodelled a few times loudly and then sat down beside Lauri on the bench.

"Listen, boy," he said, "you could become a very good cowherd, I am sure, and I should like to have you if you only wouldn't look all day long like a screech-owl. Don't you notice how beautiful it is up here with me? You will surely see it soon, for nobody can remain grouchy up here. You have still to learn how it is in winter. I will sing to you how it goes."

Vizli sang in a clear voice:

When it hails in the valley  
And snows on the height  
Can any one tell me  
That life gives delight?

Here Vizli had to give a loud shout as a sign that he did not feel that way. Then he sang on:

The oak leaves are withered  
The pine-needles fall,  
The poor birds are freezing  
And so are we all.

The starlings are silent  
Not a finch sings a note  
And I can't see a person  
With a song in his throat!

In May comes a rain-storm  
The warm south winds blow,  
The groves and the hedges,  
The flowers wake and glow.

There is piping and singing  
'Neath the glorious blue  
Now can any one tell me  
That he'll not sing too?

A tremendous shouting followed the singing again. Vizli was in the mood to make all the mountains around exult.

"Now will you be one, boy, tell me, will you be one who will not sing with me?" he asked, shaking Lauri's shoulders like a pear-tree from which something enjoyable ought to fall down.

"Yes," said Lauri staring down at the ground.

Then Vizli lost his self-control for he could not stand anything like that. He jumped up and seized Lauri again by the shoulders.

"Now tell me at once why you are like this and can't sing or laugh, or I will throw you down the whole mountain side; then you will be so shaken up that the bottom of you will come to the top and the top to the bottom," he screamed to the boy.



“Because I am always afraid,” answered Lauri and looked so wretchedly unhappy that Vizli’s indignation suddenly turned to pity.

“You poor little fellow, did they terrorize you so down there?” he asked full of sympathy. “Now you need never go back to them any more, you can stay up here with me, where there is nothing to be afraid of and nobody and nothing that could make any one distressed. And right above us is our Lord who cares for us. Then I will show you little by little how it is done and teach you right so that you can be a cowherd, and own a dairy on a pasture. Then you will be as happy as a bird in the air, so that you will be able to sing and whistle and no longer be terrified. Now you know that you will never have to go down to be frightened and now you will see how happy you will be. It won’t be three days before you will be singing like a goldfinch and all your trouble will be past.”

Vizli was so convinced that his prophecy was right that he expected the very next day to see Lauri changed. But Lauri was exactly the same as the day before and so he remained the whole day and the entire week. But when another

week had come to an end it seemed very strange to Vizli. He was certain that any one who could remain so unhappy and lifeless on his pasture in the sunniest summer weather, must have some incurable sickness, and must be taken to a hospital. Vizli considered what he ought to do first with the boy. Meanwhile Lauri seemed to grow more frightened rather than cheerful. Often during the day his burden became so heavy he thought he must scream aloud so that it would not stifle his heart so. In the night it oppressed him too, so that he often jumped out of sleep with a loud scream and if Vizli had not slept so incredibly sound he would have been badly frightened many times. "Oh, is there nobody who can help me any more!" Lauri often groaned to himself. "Nobody in the world? Oh, if only Amei knew how I feel!"

"Lauri," said Vizli one evening when he had reached the limit of his considering, "you have some sickness; you must go to a doctor. There is none here anywhere. You can go down with the herdsman to the hotel in Furka, there is often one there among the guests; one took a thorn out of my foot once. Then you must tell him

exactly how you are suffering and ask him if he can't send you to a hospital. If you can't find one, it will be best for you to go back again to my mother and ask her if she knows a doctor."

Lauri was alarmed to hear what he now had to do. But he thought quickly to himself that a doctor would not be able to help him, for he was not suffering in his body; but he would continue as before if he only would be allowed to do something more in the hut, then he would not have to go on the road again and he had the feeling that that alone could relieve him a little. So he asked tremblingly for this.

"Can I write a letter first?"

"Aha, now he wants to write his mother if he can come home again," Vinzi thought at once, "and that is the most sensible thing he can do. Yes, yes, to be sure, do that now," he said very willingly. "That is the best thing you can do. I will lay a sheet of paper on the table, early to-morrow morning you can write the letter, the herdsman will take it with him. Until you receive an answer, you can stay with me, of course. But no letters come up here, you must write that the answer must be sent to my mother, to Vin-

cent Holligers in Obertobel above the Fuchseck on the Furka Road, do you understand? This is by all means the best thing to do," repeated Vizli quite satisfied, and struck up his evening song with a very happy heart.

Early in the morning Lauri wrote his letter. It read as follows:

DEAR AMEI:

I am still on a mountain, but when you have written me I shall have to go away because the cowherd thinks I am sick. But I am not sick, but I can hardly bear it any longer. I thought if only I could write you, you would know how terribly I am suffering, and that I am thinking all day long of the past and keep saying: "If only I had not gone on the lake that day he could not have told me everything so that I believed it would not be so wicked. Oh, if only I could make it so that everything hadn't happened so!" You can't imagine at all how it is, when I have to keep thinking: Oh, if it only wasn't so, if I could only undo it! And then I am terribly frightened, because if any one knows about it, they would put me in prison, and he told me if I said one single word he would do to me as he did to another, and I know what he meant. And he said he would always know if I should do so, and he would always know where I was, and I believe it, for once on the Furka Road I met him. Then he threatened me again the same way if I should say a word to anybody, so I can't tell you anything although we have always told each other everything, but

I thought I should feel a little better if you only knew that I can hardly bear it any longer. Oh, if I could only undo what I have done! I would really never wish for a boat again nor sail on the lake any more if only I could take everything back and especially one thing that almost strangles me when I think about it, and I have to think about it when I don't want to at all.

Be sure and write me a letter. I am so glad that now you know how I can hardly bear it.

Your true friend,

LAURI LINOTT.

You mustn't show this letter to anybody, not one.

You must send your letter to Vincent Holligers in Obertobel, above the Fuchseck, on the Furka Road.

"Run with the letter, as soon as you have finished it down to the willow, the herdsman may be going," said Vizli, who was already stirring with both arms in the kettle. Lauri hurried to close his letter, wrote the address on it and ran. He reached there just in time. When he came back he went at once to his different tasks, all of which he now knew about very well. The feeling that Amei would soon know how it was with him, and then would surely be thinking about him, visibly lightened Lauri's heart a little. He did not look all day long so timid and gloomy, as he had constantly done before, and all the

work he did was finished swiftly. Vizli looked at him a few times in amazement.

“ You see, Lauri, what a happy boy you could be if you would give up staring on the ground and hanging your head. Do you know what, perhaps you ought to go home for a while, then you would be better and later on you can come back again to help me. I don't dislike you! But bring a few clothes with you when you come back.”

Then Lauri's face frowned as if Vizli had told him something terrible. He only shook his head and made no answer.

“ He doesn't want that either. There's something surely lacking in his head,” thought Vizli. “ I have never seen such a boy.”

## VI

### A SICKNESS WHICH IS NOT CURED ON THE MOUNTAIN

AMEI did not go to sleep a single night without praying to the dear Lord with her whole heart that he would take care of Lauri wherever



he was. The confidence she had that the dear Lord would surely hear her prayer consoled her constantly although the talk of the people which she heard here and there awakened the fear again that some accident had happened to Lauri. When she went to school in the morning she always stood still a while under the nut-tree, for Lauri might have come home during the night, and if he wanted to go to school, he would surely come first to the nut-tree, to see if she were there. To-day as she came out of school her mother was standing in the door and held a letter to her.

"See, Amei," she said, "this very moment I have received this letter for you. I only wonder who has written to you."

Amei cast a glance at the letter.

"Lauri wrote that!" she screamed aloud. "He is not drowned, he is not drowned!"

"God be praised and thanked!" exclaimed her mother greatly delighted. "Come in quickly, Amei, come and read what is in the letter. Where has poor Lauri gone?"

Amei rushed into the living-room with her letter and stood still in the middle of it in order to read quickly what was in it.

"What is it then? What is the matter, Amei?" asked her mother, with concern when she saw big tears falling from the child's eyes, and that she then began to sob.

"Oh, I don't understand what it is, but it is so terrible that he can hardly bear it any longer," sobbed Amei.

"Give me the letter; perhaps I can understand what it is," said her mother and took the letter. Amei could see nothing more through her tears. She was glad to have her mother read on further.

At the end it said clearly that Amei must not show the letter to anybody, but her mother had already read it.

"It is a very good thing that it has happened so and I have read it all," she replied, when Amei complained that she had done what Lauri did not wish. "It can't do Lauri any harm. You know very well how much I liked him."

This Amei really knew and was immediately consoled about it.

"But why must he complain so and be so terribly distressed, Mother? Do you know why?"

“He does not say at all, and doesn't dare to say.”

“But why should any one forbid him to tell about it?” asked Amei full of distress herself.

“He doesn't say anything about it, and I cannot judge for myself,” replied her mother, who had grown very thoughtful. “Now we must consider what can be done for the poor boy. He is really in a pitiable condition. Poor Lauri, if only he had been better cared for!” said Frau Barrell to herself.

Frau Barrell could not sleep all that night; distressing thoughts concerning Lauri kept rising in her mind. She thought and thought now this way and then that and could find no way to help the boy for with every good plan by which she wanted to help him, some great objection stood in the way. Perhaps something might be done with the one he was running away from; she could not bear the responsibility. Towards morning she finally came to a decision.

“I must do this,” she said convinced; “better that he should have to suffer punishment than go to destruction wandering around so on the road.”

Frau Barrell knew exactly the time when the Major's wife preferred to receive the people who wanted her help. At this hour she went over to her house.

"What brings you to me, Frau Barrell?" she said in a very friendly way. "Your Amei is surely well? But the child looks pale all the time. Is there anything wrong with her? You look so downcast."

"No, no, I thank you many times for your kind sympathy," replied Frau Barrell. "I am bringing news of Lauri, but ——"

"Thank God about our Lauri!" interrupted the Major's wife in great joy. "He is surely alive, isn't he? And where in all the world has he come to light? What is your doubtful 'but'?"

"Yes, he is alive, but things are not going well with him," said Frau Barrell. "I think it would be best if you would read the letter yourself. It is written to the child. You know the two had an unusual friendship for each other. He really wanted to speak only to Amei, but it is truly better so, if he is to be helped."

The Major's wife took the letter and read it quickly, faster and faster. What was in it must

have caused her great excitement, as could be seen in her face. She read it all over again from the beginning. Then she handed the letter back, without speaking a word. Silently she walked up and down the room, more and more swiftly from inmost agitation. Finally she stood still before the woman who was waiting expectantly.

“Frau Barrell, don’t show this letter to any one,” she said much agitated, “and if you should have thoughts about the reason for Lauri’s distress, don’t speak about them to any one. Don’t let the child write until we meet again. First of all I must talk with my husband.”

Frau Barrell went home much relieved. She had now no more responsibility in a matter, which still was weighty enough to make her so distressed; she had seen this, for the Major’s wife did not so easily lose her speech over an impression, and after she had read the letter she was so agitated she could not speak a word. All this Frau Barrell had particularly noticed.

Two days later the Major’s wife sent word that she would like to talk with Frau Barrell. She was very glad of this for Amei had asked good ten times that day:

"Can I write to Lauri now?" and could not understand why her mother would not allow it.

"Frau Barrell, I am going to make a little journey into the mountains and should like to take your Amei with me," said the Major's wife as soon as Frau Barrell came into the house. "The child is sensible, I should really like to take her. If she is timid and doesn't want to come, tell her instead of writing she can give her answer to Lauri by word of mouth. I am going to see him. Amei must consider that if she doesn't see him now, perhaps she will have to wait a long time before she sees him again."

Frau Barrell carried the invitation for the journey home to her Amei. But as the Major's wife had foreseen, the child began to object.

"If you are not coming, too, Mother, surely I can not go; really I must not, Mother?"

"No, you don't have to," said her mother, "but then when you will see Lauri again nobody knows. The Major's wife is going to see him and would like to take you with her. What is to become of the boy now, nobody can tell."

"Oh, then I will go, Mother," said Amei quickly changing her mind, "and can I carry



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some nuts and plums to Lauri? I am sure he has not had any for a long time. Oh, if only nobody wants to do him harm!"

The mother calmed Amei and said the Major's wife would see that nothing happened to him except what was for his good.

Three days later Amei, half afraid and half happy in her heart, was sitting in the train beside the Major's wife; it was her first journey. She felt afraid because she was going farther and farther away from her mother, from whom she had never been separated before; she felt happy because she was going to Lauri. She had plenty of time to think it over, how it would be, when she was with Lauri again, all that she would have to tell him and what he would really have to relate about all his sad experiences, and above all about his disappearance, which he had not explained at all in the letter. The Major's wife hardly spoke at all, so Amei could think undisturbed.

"Now we are in Brieg and are going to spend the night here," the Major's wife said after a long time. It was already evening.

In the big room in the hotel, where Amei was

to sleep, it seemed to her a little strange; but she thought at once, what her mother had told her, if she was in a strange room at night and did not see her mother near her, she must at once pray with all her heart, then she would soon feel that she was not alone, for the dear Lord would be there just exactly as near as at home. This Amei did and prayed straight from her heart for her father and mother and for Lauri and for herself, that the dear Lord would protect her on her journey and bring her back again safely to her mother. Then she fell asleep quite peacefully.

The next morning the Major's wife climbed into a large open carriage drawn by two horses and Amei got in too and sat beside her. The little basket of nuts and plums which she had carried the day before all the way in her lap was now laid on the front seat and had a fine place of its own. And then they trotted away into the country and then up the road to the Furka.

"Amei, now I will explain to you something," said the Major's wife, when the road began to be steep and the horses had to take a slower gait. "Now we have time, and to-morrow we

shall not be alone any longer. I am going with you to look for Lauri in his mountain pasture, as your mother has already told you. When we are near the top where the cowherd's hut stands, you must go on ahead and look for Lauri; you must be the first to speak to him. I don't want him to see me first, or he might be a little frightened and hide or even run away. Then you must say to him that I am coming too and remind him that I have always thought well of him and still do so, and if he perhaps asks you if I am coming up to visit him, tell him I am coming to see if I can help him and that I have heard that he was not happy. You are sensible enough, Amei, to carry everything out right."

The child had paid attention to every word the Major's wife had spoken, and she promised to carry out everything as she desired. At evening the carriage stopped in front of the hotel on the Furka. The Major's wife had hardly entered the house before she asked the landlord at once if he knew anything about a man whose address was "Vincent Holligers, in Obertobel, above the Fuchseck." The landlord knew everything which she wanted to learn about him. He

had for many years served as guide to the guests in his house. He was known as a very respectable man, his wife also was one of the best. The landlord immediately offered to send for him early in the morning, if the lady so desired, the way there was not suitable for her to walk; where the path turned away from the road it was very stony and steep. The Major's wife agreed to the arrangement. In the early morning the man's arrival was announced to her. She too had risen early for the day must be made good use of. So she was able to appear soon in the private parlor where Vincent was awaiting her.

"I am very glad that you have come," the Major's wife said to him. "I should like to ask you if you can tell me where I can find a boy named Lauri."

"Yes, I certainly can," answered Vincent slowly, for he was amazed to think how the lady standing before him could be associated with the ragged street boy. "He is with my son, the cow-herd, on the mountain, if he hasn't already sent him away."

The information did not seem very certain to the Major's wife, but she decided at any rate to

climb up to the pasture; if Lauri was really no longer there the cowherd would be sure to know where he had gone. She told Vincent her decision and asked him the way up to the pasture. The landlord had now come in and both men described the way as so long and so steep that she was convinced that she must follow their advice to ride up. She ordered a horse for herself and one for the child. Then she thanked Vincent for the service he had afforded her and asked if she could give any message to the son from his father.

“No, not at all, there is nothing to mention,” he said calmly, “but if the ladies would delay their journey a little I should be glad. I will go home and tell my wife what has happened. When she hears that her son is going to have such company she will go with you. She wouldn’t have it otherwise.”

The Major’s wife agreed to the short delay. It was hardly six o’clock, and in less than two hours his wife would be there, Vincent assured her. It was really so. Just as the horses were brought up and the Major’s wife stepped out to look at the saddles, Margaret came vigorously

along with a big basket on her arm. She had speedily packed a fresh loaf of bread and with the feeling that Lauri now belonged to her house, some old clothes of Vizli's in earlier days folded on top, for before such a lady as Vincent had described Lauri ought not to look ragged. Even if Vizli's clothes fitted him a little loosely, still they were not torn, like his own, but beautifully mended in all the worn places. The Major's wife immediately took a fancy to Margaret and was glad that she would come with them.

When Amei went to mount her horse she showed such fear of the animal and begged so urgently to be allowed to go on foot that the Major's wife gladly allowed it, now that she could make the way under kind Margaret's protection. She assured the Major's wife that she would not have to wait for the child at the top, for there were often many narrow footpaths between the mountain firs, which could not be travelled by a horse, but were much shorter so that she would surely be up there with the child first. So they started off.

“Is your little basket heavy?” asked Margaret



after they had gone a few steps; "give it to me, I will carry it for you."

"It seems a little heavy," answered Amei; "it is quite full of nuts and plums for Lauri, but I will carry it myself. You have one already much larger, so it would be too heavy for you to carry another!"

"You think about others too, that is right," said Margaret, "but give me the little basket. I have carried up heavier things. So do you know Lauri too?"

"Yes indeed, so well!" exclaimed Amei eagerly. "We have always known each other all our life long."

And then she related how they went to school together, and had always shared everything, everything good and everything bad, that had happened, and as she saw that the woman listened with the greatest amazement and attention, she went on talking more and more eagerly, so that they didn't notice how they were climbing higher and higher, which Amei realized when the cool mountain wind blew on her.

"Now I remember something," Amei suddenly broke off in the midst of her descriptions.

“ If we shall be up there soon I must go on ahead alone, and first tell Lauri something. Will you tell me when we are not far away from the cow-herd's hut? ”

Margaret promised to do this, but she said Amei had still a long way before her to climb.

Vizli had just finished his morning work and was drying his round arms, while he watched the boy who was standing in the corner.

“ Lauri,” he called to him as loudly as if the boy was a long way off; he really looked as if he were completely absent. “ Lauri, if you are going to begin again to stare like an angleworm at the holes in the ground to see if one is big enough to crawl into, it will be the end of you. For a few days I thought you were a little better, and now you are worse than ever.”

And so it was with Lauri. After he had written to Amei and had hoped for her sympathy and for an answer from her, he became a little more light-hearted, and it seemed as if he didn't have to carry his heavy weight alone any longer. But when on the fourth and fifth and sixth days, and also on the following no answer came, then Lauri thought Amei had not received his letter, and

would not receive any other either, and now everything for him was all over and all hope forever gone; he had to go around again alone with his distress. He knew how that was. It seemed to Lauri as if his fate was pressing him into the ground.

Vizli had stepped to the door of his hut. He breathed in the fresh air with content, for he had worked the whole morning in the warm hut.

"Bring another pail of cool water, Lauri," he said, "then we will eat. Now I wonder what neat little person is coming up here all alone."

Lauri had come along with the pail. Suddenly he gave a scream, threw the pail down on the ground and rushed towards the child, who was coming up from below.

"Is it you, Amei?" he screamed. "Have you come to see me? Did you get my letter?"

"Yes, yes, I have come to you, Lauri, now you mustn't feel badly any more, for the Major's wife is coming soon too," said Amei consolingly. "You know how good she has always been to you; she is going to help you, if you are not afraid any more."

Lauri grew snow-white with terror. "Oh, now

she is coming, I know what for," he cried. "Let me go! Let me go! I know what she is going to do."

Amei held him as tight as she could. She noticed at once that he wanted to run away and she had to tell him that the Major's wife felt kindly towards him and so was coming to help him.

Vizli had looked at Lauri with the greatest amazement, when he gave a real cry of joy and then ran to the child. Then Vizli shook his head vigorously:

"He—he—first leaped for joy so that he almost fell over, in order to reach the little person, and now she has to hold onto his blouse with both hands because he wants to run away again. There is no more help for him.—Well, what a day this is!" he suddenly exclaimed in new astonishment. "As true as I am standing on two feet, that is my mother!"

Now it was Vizli who ran down the mountain.

Amei had not been able any longer to hold Lauri, who seemed to have lost his senses, and was rushing away in the other direction.

"Haven't you any eyes in your head, you wild mountain cat, you," thundered in Lauri's ears,

who had run away blindly as if he were mad, until he suddenly lay between the horse's feet.

"Stand up!" continued the angry guide who was holding his horse firmly by the bridle and stroking him soothingly; "to run into a horse like that as if he was an open door," scolded the angry man. "You have to thank his sense for not stamping you to powder, not yours."

Lauri got up; he was not trampled on, nor at all hurt.

"Is that you, Lauri, is it actually you!" called a friendly voice down from the horse. "Were you in such haste to run to meet me, or did you want to run away from me? Come here, give me your hand!"

Lauri stood as if petrified; he did not stir, and could not bring out a word.

"I will get down here, we are already at the top," said the Major's wife, who was seated on the horse.

She dismounted, took the motionless Lauri kindly by the hand, and climbed with him up to the hut. Meanwhile Vizli and his mother had arrived in the most festive spirits. Amei, who with tears in her eyes was standing there, was

taken by the two up into the hut. Vizli had the greatest sympathy for the pretty little girl, who had come so far to visit his stubborn friend, who had run away from her in two minutes. Quite dumbfounded and silent she now was seated on the little stool between the happy cowherd and his mother beaming with pleasure at seeing him again.

Vizli looked around for the best morsels in his hut and placed them on the table in front of Amei, so that she could refresh herself. His mother too must have a little repast, and he himself disturbed by all that had happened had been obliged to delay his dinner a good while beyond the usual time. So he sat down too, urging his mother and the child to join him heartily. Although Amei had felt very hungry a short time before and would have enjoyed very much the appetizing things standing on the table before her, now she could not eat for Lauri's flight choked her and besides he was so afraid of the Major's wife, and what would she say to him?

Suddenly the Major's wife, holding Lauri by the hand, came in at the open door of the hut.

"I don't want to disturb you here," she said,



"I only want to show you that Lauri is with me, so that you will not be hunting for him. I intend to take a little walk with him."

Margaret immediately rose to offer her her chair and her place at the table. Vizli too rose and invited the lady urgently and courteously to his dinner table. Amei was the first to jump up and run to meet them as they came in, her blue eyes sparkling with keen delight. Lauri was back there again and besides holding the hand of the Major's wife. She thanked them for the time being for all their offers; later on she would gladly accept some bread and butter, but now she wanted to go out with Lauri. Margaret had hurriedly taken out the clothes from her basket; she would quickly get him ready to go to walk with the lady, but the Major's wife thought it unnecessary. She wished that all three would sit down again, and went away with Lauri.

"I only wonder if she will come back again to this hut to eat," said Vizli, sitting down again. "Come, Amei, come, sit down again beside me," he said protectingly. "Your ragged companion looks really pitiful, but the lady will

surely not do him any harm. Eat right away as much as you can."

"No, no, she is kind to him," said Amei, and now her heart was so relieved, and the white cheese tasted so excellent that she emptied her whole plate, for Vizli kept nodding to her encouragingly, when she thought of stopping.

The Major's wife had already noticed when riding up, the old fir-tree which cast its shade so beautifully over the spring and also over a good piece of the green meadow.

She now led Lauri there. She spread her shawl on the ground and sat down on it.

"Sit down here by me, Lauri," she then said. "I have something to say to you. You ran away from home because you had done something wrong, and wanted to escape from the punishment and perhaps also from the disgrace. Then you wandered around in misery and want, for your guilty conscience went everywhere with you, and will not leave you, and will distress you until you have confessed everything penitently and truly to the dear Lord so that He will forgive you and to the people who have to forgive you. Tell me everything you have done, Lauri;

tell me from the beginning what happened to you."

Lauri threw himself on the ground and buried his face in the grass.

"I cannot," he groaned.

"Then you will drag your misery along with you," said the Major's wife. "It will not give you a moment more of peace. Your guilty conscience will go with you wherever you go and you can sneak on in anguish and fear as you have already been doing. Is this so easy to bear?"

"Oh no," groaned Lauri; "oh, if only I hadn't done it! But if I tell you, he will strangle me, he always knows where I am."

"Stand up, Lauri; come, tell me if you believe what I am saying to you," begged the lady.

Lauri stood up. "Yes, surely," he answered.

"Then listen: The man who forbade you to speak shall not find you. I will take care that he cannot reach you. You have nothing to fear from him. Now tell me!"

"Oh, I cannot tell it to you," groaned Lauri again and held both hands before his face.

The Major's wife drew his hands away and looked at him kindly.

"Lauri, I know what you have done and you see I can still be friendly with you, because I know that you are sorry. But now I want to learn everything from you yourself, so you must tell me."

Lauri for a moment seemed stunned. The Major's wife knew what he had done and was still friendly with him!

Then he was quite overcome. The tears came into his eyes.

"Oh, I will really tell you everything," he stammered, for he was trying hard to swallow down his tears. Then he controlled himself and began to tell his story.

"Because I was down on the lake so much and always with the boats, because I liked to sail so much, I often met the Hun there, and he always asked me all kinds of questions and could often arrange for me to sail in a boat, and then more and more often. And when I said if only I could have a boat of my own, and could sail around in it all the time, he said several times that was not so impossible. At first I did not believe him because I thought I could never get so much money. Then the Hun said once I must

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meet him on a Sunday, then we would go together on the lake, and talk the matter over, and that I could get a boat through him, if I would do him a favor. We stayed on the lake many hours. At first he said I must not think that he was planning anything wrong, he only wanted to go into the Major's room, and he couldn't go in the daytime, only at night, and when the Major was not at home. Then I must do him a favor and call Schnufferle to me and bring him where he could take him away, for he always made such a frightful noise when he only saw him at a distance, he would wake up the whole house.

"I said then he must not take anything away from the Major's room. Then he laughed and said I needn't worry, he would only take something the Major didn't need. Then soon after that the Major went away, and the Hun knew he would be gone three days. I was down at the lake, and he said to-morrow I must get Schnufferle in the afternoon and bring him to the woods on the place, there he would wait for me and take Schnufferle with him. Then I said he must not hurt him, or I would not get him. Then the Hun laughed and said I mustn't think of such

a thing, and to lure away a little dog, when I could get a boat for it, would really not be anything much.

“The next afternoon, when I came into the courtyard nobody was there except the workmen behind the house. Schnufferle was sitting under the window on the lowest floor, where he often jumped out when I came. I had hardly whistled when he sprang out and came and licked my hand. I took him up in my arms, and ran to the woods; nobody saw us. The Hun was already there, and when he saw me he beckoned to me to come into the bushes, but Schnufferle had already noticed that he was there. He was so wise and he made a furious noise. Then the Hun rushed at him, seized him by the neck and took him away from me—oh, I can’t tell you about it,” sobbed Lauri and threw himself down again on his face.

The Major’s wife waited a while, then she said: “Go on, Lauri, I want to know everything.”

Lauri rose and first wiped away his tears, then went on in a still hoarser voice:

“Then he squeezed his neck so hard he couldn’t make another sound, but he looked at me with



such eyes, exactly as if he wanted to say, ' Can't you help me, Lauri?' then I pulled the Hun's arm, but he choked him again so he couldn't look at me any longer. Oh, how terrible it was! Then the Hun threw him in the big water hole in the woods. Schnufferle was already dead. Then I began to cry and tried to run away, but he held me fast and threatened if I did not finish what he wanted to do, it would be all over with the boat, and he would show me who was master and if I ever told a single human being what we did together that day he would do to me exactly what he had done to Schnufferle. And then he became kind again and said we would go on the lake a little while, then I would forget about Schnufferle, but I have never forgotten about him.

" And that evening he went with me to an inn and gave me good things to eat and drink, and we stayed there very late, until all the other guests were gone. Then we walked around a little; he said it was still too early. Then we climbed over the wall by the brook and through the vineyard up to the woods and then down into the courtyard to the house. The courtyard gate was

naturally locked. A ladder was standing behind the house, the Hun knew that already. He said he must climb up by that to the balcony and I must stand by the ladder and if I heard anything in the house or around the house I must whistle, so that he could jump down the ladder quickly and we would run away. At first all was still, while the Hun was up there, but suddenly a carriage came dashing along and stopped exactly in front of the door, very near the ladder. I crouched down on the ground. I didn't try to whistle. It was the Major who got out and rang at the gate. He was standing very near me, and I almost died of fright. Then the servant came and opened the gate, and as the carriage went in I shot out through the gate and away. I was so frightened I didn't know where I ran. I ran on and on the whole night long. I kept thinking that the Major would find the Hun and he would tell him I had helped him, and I never dared to show myself again. And then I ran on farther and farther for many days, and slept in barns where they would let me. And on the Furka Pass I suddenly saw the Hun who came to me and said: 'Hurry on farther! Only don't go

home for they will put you in jail.' And then he said: 'But if you ever say a word, I will do to you as I did to the little white dog. I shall always know where you are.' Then he ran away. He was with two others. Oh, I am afraid of him!"

"Lauri," said the Major's wife, "tell me something more. Isn't it clear to you that the Hun climbed into our house to steal and that you helped in a robbery?"

"Yes," answered Lauri overcome with remorse.

"Do you feel the shame and the wrong and know that you deserve to be punished?"

"Yes," said Lauri, in the same tone, "and I would much rather be punished than always have to see Schnufferle with his eyes before me. Oh, if only I could bring him back to life!"

"Well, Lauri, now we will make an end of this sad affair. I came to forgive you, if you would tell me everything truthfully and penitently and now I will forgive you and take away the distress from your heart. We will let Schnufferle rest. I prefer to have him dead than to be somewhere in bad hands. You must never for-

get, Lauri, what it is to carry around with you a guilty conscience. Only don't forget to-day and every day that you must thank the dear Lord for saving you from the hands of wicked people and ask Him to hold you and lead you by His hand."

Lauri did not know how he felt. Would all distress, all fear, all pangs of remorse be taken away from him? He could be happy as he used to be, as he had believed he never could be again! The one whom he had had to fear the most, had encouraged him, she had taken away everything that had oppressed him, indeed she was looking at him now affectionately and encouragingly. He would have liked to embrace her knees and shout to her his words of thanks a thousand, thousand times, but he was unable to. He stood dumb and looked only with speaking eyes up to his benefactress. She smiled.

"Go now and take Amei for a walk," she said; "she will be glad to be with you again to-day."

Lauri first stammered his overwhelming thankfulness, then he darted away. He wasn't able to say what he desired. Amei was standing before

the door of the hut and awaited anxiously the return of the two who had gone to walk.

"Amei," she suddenly heard shouted from below, "I am really myself again! I am really myself again!"

And then Lauri gave a shout of joy as loud and resounding as he had heard from Vizli, and had so many times sighed to himself: "Oh, if only I could shout one single time as joyfully!"

Vizli came rushing out of his hut with such big and astonished eyes and more surprised than he had ever been in his whole life before.

But Lauri had already seized Amei's hand and was running with her down to the big meadow. There was the whole great herd of cows, grazing peacefully around and all the bells they wore were ringing so sweetly back and forth that Amei wanted to stand still.

"Oh, I want to listen just a moment, do let me!" she begged.

But Lauri pulled her away.

"Come! Just come! You will still hear them," he cried and ran with her to the mountain-side lying in the midday sun. There it gleamed red and blue and white and golden with thou-

sands and thousands of little flowers, which nodded gaily to and fro in the wind and covered the whole mountainside far away, like a free, endless garden.

"Oh, come here, come here!" screamed Amei enchanted and ran into the midst of the flower field. Then she sat down on the sunny ground, Lauri beside her. From the meadow the bells rang clearly over to them, the sunshine lay over all the flower calyxes and shimmered on the crags and on all the fir-trees in the mountain forest.

"Did you know how it is here, Lauri, and still could be miserable?" asked Amei. "It is almost more beautiful than in the narcissus field. Oh, the beautiful colors of all the flowers, and sound of the bells, and so high up, that nothing is higher except the blue sky, and everything we have to fear is far, far below. It is so still here and no people. How could you be so distressed?"

"Yes, yes, it is all very well for you to say that, Amei," said Lauri, taking a long breath, as if he had to bring back the enjoyment, "if you knew what it is to be up here with something in your heart that is always stinging and tormenting you, and choking you with remorse



and fear, then I should see if you could have any pleasure in it all! When I saw and heard what is so beautiful, then it strangled me so frightfully, because I could never take any more delight in it. Sometime I will tell you everything but not now. To-day let us be as happy together as we possibly can. Oh, to-day I feel as glad as in the narcissus field when nothing had happened."

Amei was quite content because they could be happy together again, and Lauri was over what had changed him so.

Meanwhile the Major's wife had enjoyed taking her bread and butter sitting in front of the hut, Margaret and her son beside her, as she desired. She found she must give the good people who had been so friendly to the boy some explanation of the strange behavior Lauri had shown until now, and which had suddenly undergone such a change. She told them, without giving the reason, that Lauri had run away from home and that he could have no more peace and happiness until she had brought him forgiveness and had freed him from all the anxiety which had weighed him down.

Margaret and her son were both very heartily

delighted at the change for the better in Lauri's condition, for in spite of his peculiar behavior they had both become so fond of him that they would have liked very much to keep him. Vizli immediately proposed to keep the boy with him and to train him to be a good cowherd, which was the finest employment in the summer; for the winter he could find something different for him, as he would do his utmost for the boy.

The Major's wife thanked him for his friendly proposal, but she had already decided what to do for him. First of all Lauri must have a very well regulated life. She was going to take him to some school where he would be with other boys under a beneficial influence and for several years could enjoy a good schooling. So she would be very glad, she said, to leave Lauri for a short time on the mountain, until she had arranged everything for him at home, then she would send some one to fetch him.

Amei could not remain sitting any longer, she had to have some of all the flowers, more and more, the blue ones were so beautiful, the red ones still more beautiful and the golden the loveliest of all. She now had such a huge bunch she could

hardly hold it in her hand. Lauri had picked one equally large for her. Then they strolled together over the big meadow; Amei could not look enough at the beautiful white and brown cows as they grazed so contentedly and made their bells ring. Again and again she exclaimed:

“Oh, how lovely, the friendly cows that harm no one, and the sound of the bells and the sunshine over the meadow!” But it must already be the sunset, which makes the whole meadow shine so green-golden, Amei suddenly thought.

“We must go up to the hut quickly, Lauri,” she called in alarm. “The Major’s wife will be going. Evening has suddenly come! Oh, if I could only spend a day or two up here and run around!”

Then they ran up to the hut. With their light colored bouquets of flowers, with bright red cheeks and eyes sparkling with happiness, they came to the Major’s wife, who was still sitting on the bench by the hut.

“Well, have you had a good time together? Yes? That is right,” she said, delighted, “now we must go home. But you are not coming now, Lauri; the good cowherd, Vizli, is going to keep

you here a little longer, then I will write you when you are to come. Are you sorry about it?" Lauri had thought to himself that the Major's wife would perhaps take him home with her, and was frightened about it. There he might any moment meet the Hun and besides he felt a shyness about showing himself at home and seeing the house and the woods where the frightful event had occurred. So he answered honestly: "No, I would rather stay here."

Then the Major's wife took leave of Vizli, who shook her hand vigorously and invited her to visit him again and to bring Amei with her, as it pleased her so well on the mountain. Meanwhile Amei had taken Lauri quickly aside and handed him the basket full of nuts and plums, which was still standing in the corner.

"Empty it quickly," said Amei, "so I can lay all the flowers in it."

"Oh, the lovely yellow plums and all the nuts!" exclaimed Lauri and quickly brought out his pail to shake them into. "Oh, and Vizli will enjoy them too; up here there is nothing on the trees except cones."

Everything was now ready for the journey.

The lady mounted her horse. Margaret and Amei walked on behind her. But the two had to turn round every few steps to the waving, yodelling boys above to send up a farewell again and again.

“Now come here, you, and tell me you haven’t any voice for singing. I heard you,” said Vizli, when the travellers had disappeared on the last turn of the path.

“I couldn’t bring it out, but now I can,” replied Lauri, “now let us sing with all our might, and I like best:

“And would that I might see him  
Who may not sing with me!”

And Lauri himself began the song at once, for Vizli had sung it so often since that first time that Lauri knew it quite well. And the two voices mingled so jubilantly in the evening that it echoed back from all the mountains:

And would that I might see him  
Who may not sing with me!

When she reached home the first thing the Major’s wife did was to send for Lauri’s father.

She told him everything, where and how she had found Lauri, and what had been the reason for his running away. The man was so overcome by this news that he began to weep. An honorable name was to him dearer than riches, and now he had to suffer this in his own child, he lamented. The Major's wife comforted him and said Lauri was not ruined, but needed a good and firm guidance to bring him to the right way and keep him there. She told the man what she had in mind to do for Lauri. The offer filled the father's heart with such gratitude that he did not know how he could express it to his boy's generous benefactress.

"It will be a favor to me and to yourself, Linott," concluded the Major's wife, "if you take heed that your other children are better looked after and cared for than has been the case with your Lauri."

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For two years Lauri has been in a school where the order and work are so good for him that he couldn't wish for anything better. The principal of the school always has the best report of him to send to the Major's wife. He wishes to train



Lauri for a teacher and instructor; for he has written her repeatedly that of all the many who are in his care he knew of none who are so adapted for this calling as Lauri. Not only is Lauri his most eager and besides the most talented pupil but he exercises a stronger influence over his schoolmates than the best warnings are usually able to do, while he imparts to them a real fear of wrong doing.

The Major's wife then thinks to herself: "Lauri really knows the result of doing wrong." She is much pleased that he wants to become an instructor and teacher.

Every summer there comes to Lauri and Amei a time of matchless pleasure and never-failing joy. Every year Lauri is allowed to spend his vacation with his friend Vizli on the mountain-pasture. Then the Major's wife travels to the Furka and takes Amei with her. First they make a visit to Obertobel, which is a festival every year for Margaret and Vincent. Vincent never ceases to wonder how the stubborn boy could undergo such a transformation, but he rejoices over it every time for he thinks the beginning really took place in his hayloft.

Then they go up to the pasture. There good Margaret has made preparations during a whole week beforehand for she has to stay with them and not for one day only. The Major's wife desires to give Amei also the pleasure of spending a while on the mountain; but she leaves the child only in Margaret's care, and Margaret is not unwilling to be needed there, to spend these few weeks of the visit with her Vizli and the children.

Not only do Lauri and Amei look forward the whole year through with pleasure and anticipation to the days on the pasture, but Vizli and his mother know no more beautiful time in the year, and when they are sitting up there in front of the hut the first evening, Margaret and Amei on the bench, Vizli and Lauri before them on the ground, when all the mountains above shimmer in the evening light and the sound of the cow-bells comes up from every direction, then Lauri and Amei think it never was so beautiful before as this time on the mountain, and the singing and exulting never come to an end in the clear evening air until Mother Margaret rises and says:

“Now that is enough. To-morrow we must all be up with the sun again and we need to sleep.

Now let us sing the evening hymn and that will be the last."

Then the voices rise together and the song of praise soars up to the starry sky and fills with gratitude and joy the hearts of the four happy people.



# EVELI AND BENI

## I

### AT THE NETTLE-FARMER'S

"**I**N the Forest" was the name of the last house, standing somewhat higher than all the others, surrounded by meadows and fields lying scattered here and there on the mountain, the slope of which was covered with the woods called the forest. If the grass up here was not so rich as below in the valley abounding in fruit and corn, it was so sweet that when it lay cut on the meadows, the whole air all around was filled with its fragrance.

The house in the forest was not one of the large farmhouses, but one of the most beautiful meadows extended from it far down the mountainside, and the big potato-field behind the house yielded from the dry ground a rich harvest of very excellent tubers.

Why the owner was called the nettle-farmer no one could exactly say; some thought there

were a great many nettles on his land, but others said it was because his words usually hurt like stinging nettles. He himself was not displeased to be so called, for he knew only about the first explanation, and it seemed to him right that the people should believe his land bore nettles and not the fair grass and abundant potatoes which he harvested.

In his barn, built next the house, stood two cows beside the indispensable goat, but there would be room for three, the farmer often thought to himself and reckoned that with one good summer more, an abundant crop of hay and the milk which he could furnish to the cowherd's hut, enough would be realized for him to purchase a third cow. His brother-in-law below on the mountain had three; why should he not get ahead as far as he? He had in mind still another plan which he was agitating. The nettle-farmer had many plans; he was always planning. He had two boys, twelve and fourteen years old, both of whom were already working industriously with him and now the younger one was ready to leave school and could work with him all day.

If his live-stock should be increased somewhat,



he could make good use of the piece of land adjoining his sunny meadow and even more valuable than this. He could acquire the land he knew. The owner would sell it; he already had enough work, alone, as he was, without wife or child. But then he could make good use of a third boy for the increased work, the nettle-farmer reckoned still further, for he would never employ strangers. But he did not know why he should not have three boys, he said to himself, his brother-in-law had three and two daughters besides, but daughters he did not long for. The work which fell to his wife she accomplished alone, promptly and quietly as well; such young hussies would waste their time in gossiping and be always wanting something; this he knew for certain. But a boy he could make use of. This was the clear result of his reckoning.

Sure enough not long after this, when he came home from work, his wife called to him:

“Come in and see the pretty baby that has come.” And as he stepped in she said:

“But it is not a boy, it is a little daughter.”

This vexed the farmer very much, for he had not counted on it.

“Do what you like with it,” he said and went out again.

When Sunday drew near, and the child was to be taken to the village and baptised, the mother asked:

“What shall the child be called? We haven’t decided anything about it.”

Then the father replied:

“You can call her Eva for she has above all brought one person misfortune.”

The wife seldom answered back but this time she said:

“The little one really did not come specially to bring you misfortune, but she can be called Eva all the same; I like the name.”

So the little one was baptised Eva and afterwards called Eveli. Eveli grew and was a very docile and unusually tender-hearted child. She avoided every little creature in her way or quickly jumped over it in order not to step on it. If she came across one that was wounded or half dead, she had no peace until she had placed it gently on a soft leaf so that it looked very comfortable in its pretty bed. So Eveli had many little friends around the house, for it seemed as

if all the creatures wanted to return the kindness shown to them. They hopped and flew around Eveli everywhere, and when she held out grain or crumbs in her open palm, the birds would come flying along and peck them quite trustfully out of her hand. But when people came Eveli quickly fled into the house, and even indoors she would look around shyly, as soon as she heard a footstep. But this was not to be wondered at, for wherever there were people Eveli always felt that she was in the wrong place. From the time when she was little, if she was running around and her father came along he would say sharply:

“Don’t be always in the way, you little good-for-nothing thing, you!”

And later on the two brothers Heini and Lieni, also began to do likewise and even much oftener than their father, for it was so convenient when one was vexed about one’s work—or they were angry with each other, to give vent to their feelings in this way. So they always cried out even before they really came near Eveli, first one and then the other:

“Don’t always be getting in the way, you good-for-nothing thing, you!”

So Eveli came to feel that wherever she was with people, she was in the way. This made Eveli very shy and afraid of everybody, except her mother. She was never unfriendly and never gave her a cross word. But she heard very few other words from her, for she had to work hard all day long, and in the evening she was so tired that she fell asleep immediately when she lay down beside Eveli.

When Eveli had passed her sixth year and spring was approaching, the farmer's wife said one day to her husband:

"We must think what to do; the child must go to school after Easter."

"There is nothing to think about. She will go to school then, and that is all there is about it," retorted her husband.

"She is still too little and not strong enough to make the trip four times a day," said his wife further. "She must stay down at noon. We must ask some one about it."

"Not to send her to school would be the most sensible way," growled her husband.

"I think so, too; but if the notice comes up

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from below telling what we have to do," replied his wife calmly.

"Then send her to your brother."

Whereupon her husband went away. His wife knew very well that her brother down in the village was the only one whom they could ask, and also the nearest; but her husband himself had to make the decision or else he would never think she had done right—this she knew very well. So on Sunday afternoon she took Eveli by the hand, for she had to learn the right way down the mountain to her relatives in Unterwies. No one was at home except the old grandmother, the mother of the nettle-farmer's wife, who lived with her son. She was very much delighted to see her daughter again, for she left her house so rarely that her mother hardly saw her twice in the year, since she could no longer go up to the Forest. She was delighted also that she would now learn to know her granddaughter Eveli, and it pleased her very much that from Easter on she would come every day to her.

Her son's five children were already grown—Hans, the youngest, sixteen years old. Eveli was unspeakably relieved when she heard that

all five, and the father and mother besides, were away. She had trembled all over at the thought of the moment when she would have to go in before all these people, and have to greet them. But the grandmother was so kind and so old, and she trembled, too, all the time, as Eveli could easily see; perhaps she was frightened, also. Eveli at once felt great confidence in her.

The grandmother thought her daughter would do well to wait for her brother and his wife to make arrangements with them herself; but the woman was in a hurry to get home again; her husband was not accustomed to have her go away, and he had surely been expecting her back for a long time, she said. The grandmother could tell them about the matter, she thought, and if no objection was made, from Easter on Eveli would come to them every day at noon-time. The grandmother promised to speak in behalf of the arrangement. She was delighted to have Eveli come. The child in her quiet way would surely be frightened to be in an entirely strange place, but with her she would feel at home, she thought. Eveli would like to come down to the grandmother, if only she was alone, but in her



heart she had great fear of the cousins and her aunt, the old and the young, and kept hoping that it would be a long time before Easter. But Easter came along very quickly and Eveli had to begin going to school. When she appeared for the first time at dinner with her cousins and had to sit down at the table with so many people, she was so timid, that she did not dare lift her eyes, and could hardly swallow her food from sheer fright before all the faces looking at her. If she was asked a question, she gave such a low answer that she could hardly be understood, and when they rose from the table, she had no idea where to stand, for she was so afraid they would all say immediately that she was in the way. After a few days the young cousins began to tease her at the table.

One would say: "Have you never learned to talk, Eveli, or don't you need to up there; do they do something else?" And another would say: "Perhaps they do up there like the birds in the forest; they chirp instead of talking."

Then they would all laugh very hard, and their sisters would laugh loud, too; and one would say Eveli must begin singing; she must be a canary

bird. They had wanted one for a long time. This would make them all laugh so loud that Eveli was completely paralyzed with fright.

“Stop teasing now,” said the grandmother; “if you don’t mean any harm, you can surely see how frightened she is.”

But every day there would be a little teasing, for Eveli did not learn to talk, and sat so doubled up at the table that the young cousin Hans said she looked exactly like a closed pocket-knife, which called forth a loud peal of laughter.

After dinner, one after another soon went out, to work in the kitchen, in the field or the garden; only the grandmother was left behind. Then she seated herself at her spinning-wheel, and there always came a beautiful hour for Eveli until she had to go back to school. She sat down in the safe corner behind the grandmother’s spinning-wheel, and the grandmother would tell her something about the time when she herself was a child, as Eveli was now, or talked kindly with her, or often said: “Now let us sing together a little while.”

Eveli liked this especially, for although the grandmother’s voice was a little shaky, the songs

sounded just as beautifully in Eveli's ears, and she liked to sing with her, for she enjoyed singing above everything else. She herself had a pure, clear voice, and although it was not very strong, it was as musical as a little bell. The grandmother liked to listen when the soft voice sang her old songs, which she no longer heard any more. Eveli always warmed up and was able to tell about all sorts of things when she was alone so with the grandmother, while she never dared speak a word before her cousins and aunt, and became more and more shy with them the more they tried to make her talk by teasing. When she flew away like a timid bird as quickly as possible from the table into the corner where the spinning-wheel stood and the grandmother would immediately sit down again, then she often said to her:

“You see, Eveli, they don't do it to hurt you; they only want to make each other laugh, and you should laugh with them.” But that was not possible to Eveli.

## II

## EVELI MAKES AN ACQUAINTANCE

AFTER school, when Eveli went up the mountain, there was always ahead of her a crowd of boys, who with a great noise and much jumping to one side, were going back the same way. They were boys from the different farms lying scattered on the mountain. Here and there one of the crowd would disappear. His goal was reached or he had to continue his way by a side path. Towards the top of the mountain the crowd always became smaller, and finally Eveli climbed in silence and alone to the Forest. The crowd always remained large half-way up the mountain, and Eveli held back and crept along close to the hedge, so that she would not be seen by the boys. There, at the end of the hedge, just before a troop of them turned aside, something remarkable happened every day. Eveli could not really grasp what it was; there the procession stopped every time, a loud singing and strange noise began, and lasted a little while, then a tremendous laughter broke forth, and then, still

laughing boisterously, the boys ran away in different directions. Eveli wondered a little what always happened there, although she was terribly afraid of the noisy boys. To-day she had come somewhat nearer to them than usual, they had so many side-springs to make. Then came the little house somewhat aside from the path. A large birch-tree stood beside it. There the noise broke forth every time. The boys were all armed with long hazel-rods; this Eveli could see very well. She went quickly forward a little way, then stooped down behind the crooked apple-tree by the path.

Then it burst forth; with frightfully raised voices the boys all sang together in strict time:

There sits hump-back Beni,  
There sits hump-back Ben;  
Three times three is nine  
And one is ten.

Besides those behind beat time on the school-bags of those in front of them so hard that it resounded and cracked and the rods flew in pieces. Then the singers had to laugh so uproariously that they didn't move from the spot for quite a

while. Then suddenly they all began to scatter up and away.

Then Eveli came out from behind the tree; she looked searchingly over to the house to see if any one was in sight there. She saw nothing; the door was standing open, but no one was there. But near by, under the big birch-tree, stood a little chair close up to the trunk. Something small was sitting in it that moved. Eveli ventured a little nearer, now everything could be plainly seen. In the chair sat a little hump-backed boy with black hair, and he was looking over with inquiring eyes at Eveli. To him the boys had sung their song; this was quite clear now to Eveli. She had a beautiful red pink in her hand. The grandmother had broken the flower from her plant in the window and given it to Eveli because she had always looked so longingly at the beautiful blossoms.

Then Eveli suddenly ran to the birch-tree, quickly laid the pink on the little boy's knee and ran away without looking round, as if she had done something which ought to frighten her.

On the following afternoon, when she was again passing the same way, she heard nothing



of the noise and laughter of the day before. Perhaps the boys had gone so far ahead of her that she could not hear them, or perhaps the child was not sitting there, so they had not sung.

Eveli wondered very much whether he was there. She had to go a little nearer, as she had done the day before.

Suddenly from the birch-tree sounded a call: "Come over here to me!"

Eveli timidly drew back a few steps. She would have run away, but the call sounded again and so entreatingly:

"Do come over here to me!"

Then Eveli went slowly towards the birch-tree, looking cautiously around her to see if any one else was there. In the little chair sat a pale and very deformed boy. Near to, he looked older than Eveli had supposed, as from a distance she thought he was a very little boy.

"Come nearer to me," he said, when Eveli again stood still from shyness. She obeyed. The boy looked at her very earnestly with his searching gray eyes. The pale little face was so thin and bore such an expression of suffering that it went deep to Eveli's heart.

"Why did you bring me the flower?" he now asked.

"Because they sang so to you and then laughed," answered Eveli.

"Yes, and I am not to blame," said the boy.

"For what?" asked Eveli.

"For the hump-back. They laugh at me for that."

The little boy looked up at Eveli with his earnest eyes so searchingly, as if he wanted to ask whether she, too, felt like laughing.

"Yes, I know how it is," she said sympathetically.

"No, you don't know that; you haven't a hump-back." The boy had at once looked at the child's back.

"But I have other things that make them laugh and they do laugh at me, too, you can believe," said Eveli.

"What for?" asked the boy.

"Because I can't talk before so many people, and because I am always in everybody's way," answered Eveli.

"You must just get out of their way," exclaimed the boy.

“ I can’t, only the others can do that; but I really cannot,” asserted Eveli, “ when I want to so much. But you know perhaps they don’t mean to do any harm,” she quickly added, as if to console herself and him; “ they only want to do something to make them all have a great laugh together.”

“ Do you think so? ” said the boy. “ What is your name? ”

“ Eveli, and what is yours? ”

“ Beni. Didn’t you hear what they sang? ”

“ Yes, to be sure; but I did not know if it was true what they sang, or only made up. Are you always alone? ”

“ Yes; Father only comes home to sleep, and early in the morning goes away again to work.”

“ Where is your mother, then? ”

“ I haven’t any, only an aunt; but she never hears anything; she is always inside in the house. Will you come again to-morrow to see me? ”

“ Yes, if you are so alone, I really will,” said Eveli who was on the point of hurrying away.

“ Will you come every afternoon? ” asked Beni imploringly.

“ Yes, if you would like to have me, I will

come," said Eveli hastily, for now she had to run; she had lingered some time in talking. Eveli felt a joy in her heart such as she had never known before. There was somebody in the world who was glad to have her come to him again, and it was a poor, sick boy of whom she did not need at all to be afraid. As soon as she reached home she ran to her mother to tell her everything, and to ask if she might go to Beni every afternoon and stay a little while with him. For a long time her mother could not listen, as she had to hurry from the washing to strain the milk, from there to the little pigs, and from these to peel potatoes in the kitchen. Here Eveli finally reached her and told her experience and made her request. Her mother was glad to allow Eveli this pleasure; nobody at home asked after the child, and if she came home early or late nobody cared except her.

Eveli could hardly wait the next day, until the noisy boys had finished their uproar and had scattered, so that she could venture to go ahead. Beni held out his thin hand to her.

"To-day I didn't care when they sang, because I knew that you would come along behind them

and would hear them, and because you think they only do so in order to make each other laugh hard," he said. "Will you stay with me a little while now?"

Eveli was glad to do so and sat down on the ground beside the chair. Beni wanted so much to know what happened in school and how it was when one could read, and if Eveli believed she would soon be able to read a story out of a book and understand what some one had told him. His aunt had told him once that was what they learned in school and when he got well and had strength in his legs to walk he, too, could go to school and learn everything like other children.

"But I never can do that," added Beni sadly; "I don't gain any strength; I can't stand up."

Then Eveli understood why he always had two little crutches standing beside him. Poor Beni was not only hump-backed, he could not stand or walk; he could only hop around leaning on his crutches. This seemed frightful to Eveli; with anguish in her heart, she tried to think of some consolation.

"When you are bigger you will surely be stronger," she said, persuading herself conclu-

sively. "Then you can always go to school; you are surely not so very old."

"I am already nine years old," said Beni quite earnestly, shaking his head.

"Well, that is nothing," continued Eveli hastily. "You know what we can do until you are able to come to school, too? I will come to you every day, and then I will show you each time what we have learned, what letters and what strokes to write. You know I can't read very well yet, but the teacher often tells us a story. I will tell you about it; then it will be exactly as if you could come to school."

Beni's eyes, usually so anxious and sad, shone with delight.

"Do you think that I really can learn to read, and then can read all the stories in the books and understand them?" he asked, quite excited over such a promising prospect.

"Yes, to be sure, just as we do in school. I will really pay strict attention, so that I sha'n't forget anything," promised Eveli, "not a thing, so you can follow everything right. Shall we begin right away?"

Beni trembled with longing for his first in-



struction, and never before had a child undertaken his first pencil mark with such rapture as Beni to-day executed his.

Something entirely new had come into Beni's life. When he woke in the morning he saw something before him which he could delight in; this he had never known before. All day long he looked with hope in his heart towards evening. Every day now he listened with the greatest longing for the boys' noisy song; it was the sure sign that Eveli was coming immediately. As soon as the boys had roughly scattered, she always stepped from behind the apple-tree and came running along. Then work began at once, and Beni went at it with such eagerness that Eveli could never give him enough to learn. He always kept asking: "Haven't you learned something more?"

If Eveli then began to think it over, she often found something more that she had forgotten. Then Beni's eyes would light up in joy as if a new stroke to a letter was a matchless jewel.

"Perhaps we shall soon come to the reading, Eveli, think how that will be!" he said, beaming with happiness. "Just think, then we can read

what is in every book. Do you think there are many books? Is there always something more to read as long as you live?"

"Yes, indeed, naturally," answered Eveli with assurance. "Only think, in school each class has its own books, no two alike, and the children who can read go every Sunday to the pastor and bring home a book to read; just think, each one has one, and every Sunday each one goes again and brings home a new book and never, never the same."

Beni was very much amazed that there were so many books, and his desire increased more and more to get ahead where he would be able to read what was in these books. This desire was increased by the beautiful stories, which Eveli repeated after the teacher every few days. They were so exciting and filled all his thoughts, but always came to an end so soon that Beni felt a real pain every time, when Eveli said: "Now that is the end."

Then he thought perhaps it was a little longer in the book, or a new one followed immediately after. Eveli never knew but one at a time. But these delighted Beni the whole week long. There

was something else Beni learned through Eveli, a pleasure, which brought the tears to his eyes every time, yet delighted his heart. Beni had never heard singing, for the boys' daily screaming: "There sits hump-back Beni," could hardly be called so. Eveli had often told him about her stay with her cousins at noon-time and how glad she was every day when all the others left the room and she had quite a while all alone with her grandmother, who was always so kind and sang songs with her.

Then Beni was very eager to know how this singing sounded, and when Eveli sang to him in her soft musical voice for the first time, bright tears ran down Beni's cheeks, from the beginning to the end. After that he felt there was nothing more beautiful, and every day when Eveli insisted there was nothing more to learn, he begged urgently:

"But please sing me a song, or just one verse, or please sing two!"

And he would look up at Eveli so longingly that she could never deny the request, although she thought sometimes it was too late after all the spelling. When Eveli sang again, Beni

would sit as if absorbed, and he was unaware that his eyes had filled with tears.

When Eveli asked him what she should sing he would say every time:

“The song about Spring.”

Eveli was always willing to do what he wished, and sang immediately what she had already sung to him a hundred times before:

All the birds once more are trilling,  
Welcome Spring, welcome Spring!  
Their sweet notes, my chamber filling,  
Bid me sing, bid me sing!

What can such a call betoken,  
Songster free, songster free!  
See! My wings are torn and broken,  
Woe is me! woe is me!

Still may song the sick heart lighten  
In thy room, in thy room.  
Wings may fail, but prayer will brighten  
Darkest gloom, darkest gloom.

Thou canst feel the sunbeams glancing,  
Warm and sweet, warm and sweet.  
See them on the tree-tops dancing  
With gay feet, with gay feet!

What was cold and dry has taken  
New life on, new life on;

Blossoms everywhere awaken,  
Winter's gone, Winter's gone!

For thee also Spring is given,  
Trust to Love, trust to Love!  
Thou shalt soar to azure heaven,  
Far above, far above!

After this, if there was still time and Eveli did not have to run away at once in order to be at home for supper, when her father and brothers would return, Beni usually asked:

“Now sing about getting well!” and if Eveli thought she could she would sing also:

Keep a brave heart,  
Even with many a sorrow  
Griefs soon depart.  
Near a kind Saviour thou art,  
Wait—He will help thee to-morrow.

Do not lament  
Even though clouds lower thickly,  
Storms are soon spent.  
When night is gone, follow quickly  
Radiant day and content.

Sorrow and pain  
Are not for lasting intended.  
After the rain  
Bright comes the sunshine again—  
Soon will thy illness be mended!

## III

## A NEW SORROW

ABOUT this time everybody near the nettle-farmer was having a hard life. Even the two boys, whom he usually praised for their work, could no longer do anything right for him. The two were so cross about it that they had to vent their ill-humor on somebody. There was no one there except Eveli, who now could go and stay where she liked, so she had to hear from her father or brothers that she was everywhere in the way, and besides was now much too big; she could do something better.

The nettle-farmer had attained his desire; he had been able to buy a third cow, and with his two grown sons had accomplished all the work to be done, so well, that he could now purchase the fine piece of land that he had had his eye on for a long time. He knew that his neighbor intended to sell it as soon as a buyer came along, who could pay for it at once; and he could do it, for he had thought and reckoned about it day and night for seven years, and he and all belong-



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ing to him had pinched as much as possible to lay aside every penny for the purchase of the piece of land, which would bring in so much that later on they would be better off than ever before. Therefore they could well spare a little now, he said.

So one Sunday he went over to the neighbor's to bargain with him. The man lived all alone; he had never married and for years had looked after everything alone, his barn, his fields and his house. However, his work had become somewhat too much for him with the years, or he would not have thought of parting with his beautiful piece of land, he had said himself. Until now no purchaser had actually appeared. When the nettle-farmer entered his house and made his proposal the neighbor's eyes shot fiery glances from his dishevelled hair and shaggy beard at him, and he said he was surprised that the nettle-farmer should have the impudence to ask him to sell his land. He would have nothing to do with him and the nettle-farmer should know why. Then he showed him the door and said nothing more. The nettle-farmer went out; he saw there was nothing to be done. He had made a mistake

when he supposed that his neighbor would long ago have got over what had happened twenty years before. A pear-tree stood on the boundary between their two fields, which adjoined, and both farmers claimed it as his. Since they could not agree about it, they went to law; the tree was awarded to the nettle-farmer. Since the nettle-farmer had won, the matter had long ago been dismissed from his mind and he assumed his neighbor would have done the same. But his neighbor had lost and had never got over the loss of his pear-tree, and every time he looked at it his anger towards the nettle-farmer rose anew.

Since this Sunday when the neighbor had turned him away no one could any longer please the nettle-farmer, and it seemed as if he became more and more morose. He could think of nothing else day and night except how he could arrange to get possession of the piece of land for which he had toiled and saved and struggled for seven years, as if for the highest good, the possession of which would sweeten all endeavor. Now that he saw himself at his goal, it could not be possible that everything had been to no purpose, all at an end, everything in vain; it was not

to be borne. The one he coveted was a fine piece of land, really the most productive on the whole mountain. It not only lay in the full sun at mid-day but it stretched away on the mountain towards the west, and had the last rays of the setting sun. Brooding gloomily, the nettle-farmer went around revolving his single desire again and again until he came to the decision to offer his neighbor what he would not refuse. The piece of land he must have, even if he had to work three full years more for it, and would not possess a penny of ready money afterwards. This land, with its fertile soil, this single beautiful piece of land must be his possession.

One Sunday evening, when twilight was coming on, the nettle-farmer went a second time to his neighbor's house; in bright daylight he did not care to go. The house stood rather far away on the western slope of the mountain and a good piece farther down. His neighbor was called the middle-farmer, because his farm was not up in the forest, neither did it lie down on the mountain. He was standing in the barn-door when the nettle-farmer came along. The nettle-farmer walked slowly to the barn:

"I have come once more about buying the land," he said; "I think we could agree about it."

"You know my mind," said the other without moving.

"I can pay even more than you stipulated for the land."

"It makes no difference."

"I will pay a quarter more and half in cash."

"What I have said, you know."

"How much do you want for it? I will give even more; say what the last price is."

Then the middle-farmer burst forth:

"You cannot have my land, even if I should have to become a beggar! And if you stand here until New Year's and keep on asking, you will get no other answer; now you know." Whereupon the middle-farmer turned his back to his neighbor and went over to his house.

The nettle-farmer was so angry that he doubled up both fists, but there was nothing to be done. This was the end of the plan he had cherished so many years. He went home as if he had been dealt his death-blow.

Although this was a very bad time, and Eveli did not know where to put her feet without mak-

ing somebody angry, yet in her heart she had one consolation, that she could spend every afternoon with her friend, and see what delight Beni always, always found in her coming! Meanwhile mid-summer had come. To-day the teacher had told the children in school that the next week vacation would begin, and they would not have to come any more for six weeks. This was great news, which Eveli had to bring to Beni. Now the bright daylight lasted so long, perhaps she would be allowed to come to him early in the afternoon. So how many lovely hours they would have to spend together! Eveli hurried up the mountain after school, and as soon as the way was clear, to the beech-tree. Beni sat weeping pitifully in his chair. He could hardly bring out his "Good evening, Eveli," in the midst of his sobs.

"What is the matter, Beni; what is the matter? Has any one hurt you?" asked Eveli quite shocked.

"Oh, it is all over," he sobbed. "You can never come any more; we can never be together any more. I have to go away. It is all over, all over."

Eveli was surprised and shocked to the highest degree.

“Where must you go? Why must you go away? Who has told you so?” she asked in succession, with the greatest excitement.

But she had to wait a while until Beni, to whom now in Eveli's presence the matter appeared for the first time in all its sadness, could collect himself sufficiently to be able to give a connected story of what had happened. He sometimes had attacks when he became unconscious and fell off his chair. If the aunt happened to come out, for she could not hear him at all, she would lift him up and place him in his chair again, or bring him in to his bed, where he would come to himself again.

To-day he had fallen down very early in the morning, Beni went on to say, and when he came to he was still lying on the ground and could not get up, and he could not bring out his aunt no matter how loud he cried. And it hurt him so badly in his side, and still hurt him. A long time afterwards his aunt came out and at first he could hardly sit up, and had shown her where it hurt him so, and then she had said she must



go to the doctor, and had gone. Then she brought back word that they must take him down to the hospital right away, to-morrow morning. There he would have to stay a long time; the doctor had ordered it.

This was sad news for Eveli, too. Just now in the beautiful vacation time everything would be broken up; she would not be able to go to Beni any more, for a very long while, perhaps no more all summer. Eveli could find no consolation. She sat on the ground beside Beni's chair and then she saw how sad he looked, and she thought how to-morrow he would have to go down to the big hospital among entire strangers, and perhaps would never come back; then Eveli also began to cry softly, and Beni, who had not entirely stopped, began to sob pitifully again. To-day they could not study any more, neither could they sing a note.

The next morning, when Eveli, on her way to school, looked over, the little chair was no longer under the birch-tree, so it was really true, Beni had already been taken away early in the morning to the hospital. Then Eveli felt such a choking in her throat as if she must scream aloud.

But to go to school with weeping eyes, no, that she must not do. She ran with all her might down the mountain.

In the afternoon Eveli was able to pour out her troubles to the grandmother, after her young cousin Hans had teased her at the table by saying: "Eveli must be a little nun. Every day she drops her eyes lower to the ground, and at last she will not open them at all; then she will have to bore her way along, like a mole;" whereupon an uproarious laughter followed.

She told the grandmother everything, what had happened to Beni, and how he had now disappeared, perhaps forever, so that she would never see him again. But the grandmother said Eveli must not forget what she had already told her, that when the dear Lord sends people something hard to bear, He always lays a blessing underneath, which one may not see right away, because the burden hides it, but when that is taken away it comes forth, and one can at last be thankful for everything. Now Eveli must think only about Beni and not of herself, and that going to the hospital will be a great benefit to the poor boy. There he will have good care and not

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be so neglected as at home, where his father is away from early till late, and he could never talk with the deaf aunt, and never call her when he needed help so badly. Eveli really would have done so and only thought of Beni, if he had not been so inconsolable himself because he had to go.

On her way home she hurried breathlessly past the place where she could see the beech-tree. She could not bear to look over where everything was so empty. She had four days more to go over the path, then Sunday would come and vacation begin. Thinking of the many lovely afternoons which she could have spent in the coming vacation with Beni she had to shed many tears during the four days of going to school.

On Sunday morning Eveli crouched down as low as she could in the window-corner with her red corn-flowers, the lovely petals of which she wanted to lay in her mother's singing book and dry. Eveli knew very well why she crouched down so low and hid. It was the time when her brothers would come in to their mother with their affairs of Sunday neckties, collar-buttons, and what their mother might produce of Sunday finery. They were both usually in a hurry to be

ready before their father came, because he would say they didn't need to want such foolishness. So Eveli knew very well that she must hide, so as not to be in the way. Then the door was opened with considerable noise and a firm step came in. Eveli looked under the table through to the door, to see which one it was; it was neither of her brothers, but her young cousin Hans.

"Good morning, Aunt! Where is Eveli?" he asked as he came in. "She must have put her head under her wing and hid in the straw when she saw me coming; but it's of no use, she must come out!" Then he had to laugh hard because Eveli really came out of the corner as frightened as if she came out of hiding in the straw.

"So you ventured to come out?" he continued, still laughing. "Grandmother sent me. She said, if it wasn't for you and me nobody would give her any pleasure any more. We are two brave ones, aren't we? She sent word for you to come down to the hospital, if Aunt has no objection."

Eveli did not know what she heard; was it really true? Would she be allowed to visit Beni in the hospital? She looked enquiringly at her mother. She nodded kindly and said:

“Yes, yes; surely you may go.”

“When?” asked Eveli, still uncertain about the good fortune.

“To-day at two o’clock, and again later; that much I understood,” stated Hans.

“Is it to see Beni? May I go there to Beni?” asked Eveli, not quite sure of the matter.

“To Benjamin Lorch, Unterwies Hospital,” said Hans solemnly.

Eveli was so delighted she did not know what she ought to say to Hans.

“Would you like an early pear?” came out like a sudden inspiration.

“Yes, indeed,” laughed Hans, “but you really haven’t any; they are not yet at all ripe.”

But her mother had early that day discovered the first ripe fruit on the topmost branch of the pear-tree which turned so beautifully to the sun. She had knocked it down and brought it to Eveli. She now took the pear out of her pocket and held it out to Hans. It was red and yellow and round as a ball it was so ripe.

“Gracious, see the beauty!” exclaimed Hans, seized it, and with his firm teeth bit so hard into the soft pear that it squirted and cracked, again

and again until with skin and core it disappeared.

“That was the best pear I ever ate in my whole life,” said Hans with satisfaction; “so full of juice and so warm. Now I will always take your part, Eveli, when you are with us, and if the others laugh at you again I will laugh at them so hard and say such things to their faces that they will have to be glad when I keep still again. You will see, Eveli, how that will work! From now on I will keep with you, count on it! Now I must go home; good-bye!”

Whereupon he left the house, and Eveli looked after him, filled with gratitude. She had suddenly won a protector in him; she did not know how, but she was so glad about it.

## IV

### IN THE HOSPITAL

EVELI thought to-day it would never be twelve o'clock, when the short dinner would be ready, and after that she could go. But twelve o'clock came even to-day, and as soon as her father and brothers had finished their meal and had left the



room again, she ran to her mother in the kitchen and asked quickly:

“ May I go now? ”

Her mother thought there was no hurry; it would be almost two hours before two o'clock, and she would not be allowed to go into the hospital earlier. But still she allowed her to go, for she saw that the child would have no more peace, only she must wait down below; she could go to her grandmother until it was time. Then Eveli ran off. Eveli had never before seen everything so beautiful outdoors as it was to-day. The bright red morning glories were climbing everywhere in the shining hawthorn hedge, the thyme wafted its fragrance from under all the hedges and on the green mountain slope which shimmered in the sun. But where the fields began, there was the most beautiful sight of all. There the blue corn-flowers looked out from among the tall corn with such merry eyes, and the red poppies gleamed and shone next them and behind and on every side. Eveli must have some flowers, the red ones and the blue; there were so many they would surely delight Beni now that he could not sit outdoors any more, and could not see the

flowers and meadows and hedges any longer. Eveli was so eager to take Beni as many as she could reach of the beautiful flowers that she picked and picked, and yet there were more even lovelier ones still coming in sight; whole plants of blue corn-flowers were to be seen farther on, and there it blazed like fire from the red through the green corn. Eveli must have these, and still more of the blue; over there were the most beautiful of all. But now her bouquet was so big that she could hardly clasp it any longer with both hands. She went on farther; she could not run any more, the flowers would not allow it; but it was quite right, she would not have to wait so long before the door of the hospital. Eveli had spent more time picking flowers than she realized. Just as she was coming into the village, and was going back of the churchyard across the meadow to the hospital, it struck two from the church tower. So Eveli could go at once into the isolated house, around which it was very still. One of the nurses came out.

“Are you Eveli, who would like to visit Beni?” she asked kindly. “If so, come right in with me.”

She opened the door. Eveli stepped into a

room where there were a number of white beds; in some sick children were lying; others were empty. She looked all around; there in a lovely, clean bed Beni was sitting up and smiled with sparkling eyes over at Eveli. She ran to him and laid her big bouquet of flowers in front of him. Eveli had seen that a door was standing open into another room, but she had not looked in there, and hurried straight to Beni's bed. But the red and blue flowers had shone in as she passed by, and a beseeching voice now called out:

“Bring me just one of them, only one!”

Eveli understood what was meant and looked questioningly at Beni. She had brought them all as a present for him. Then he took out two blue and two red ones from the bunch and said:

“Take all the rest to them. They must be suffering so much in there; I hear them really groaning.”

The sister, who was standing near, came along and said it would be all right if Eveli wished to do so, and she would go with her. Then Eveli seized her huge bouquet again and followed the sister into the other room. It was a large ward, with many more beds in it than in Beni's room,

and in almost every bed lay a sick woman. When Eveli came in with her shining bouquet they cried from all sides: "Oh, how lovely! oh, how lovely! Oh, bring me just one! And me one!" Then Eveli went from one bed to another and always laid two flowers on every cover, one red and one blue, and the pale women looked at Eveli so thankfully, and all held their flowers in their hands so it looked as if there was a great festival in the hospital. But even after the distribution Eveli still had a large bunch in her hand, she had gathered such a quantity of flowers. She looked questioningly at the sister, to see if she should begin giving them out again. The sister took Eveli by the hand.

"Come; you can give still more pleasure," she said, and went with her to the door.

Then the women called to her: "Come to us again! Please, will you come again?" And Eveli was glad to promise that she would come again. Such happiness as now filled Eveli's heart she had never before experienced. All the suffering women wished she would come again, and she could bring them something every day to make them happy. The sister went with Eveli

through the corridor and opened another door. Again she stepped into a large ward which was full of beds; in there lay young men with wasted faces, and also quite old men with gray beards and snow-white hair.

Eveli stood still for a moment in the doorway, but one of them immediately called: "Come along, you must not be afraid. Will you give me one of the flowers, too?"

And now so many voices called even more longingly than the women. Then one exclaimed:

"Oh, the corn-flowers! Oh, could I see the corn-flowers? Give me just one of the blue ones!"

And so many of them called and begged and thanked Eveli so heartily when she laid two flowers on their bed, just as the women had done!

In the farthest corner lay one more who frightened Eveli a little, his hair and his beard looked so wild. He sat up in his bed and looked with such sharp eyes at the flowers that Eveli grew more and more frightened and felt perhaps she was in the way. She stood still and considered whether she ought to turn away.

"Come here, come here; I won't hurt you,"

said the sick man, as he held out his hand longingly to the child. "Show them to me, if you don't care to give them to me but put one in my hand. There, thank you, you are a good little child. Where did you get them? On the mountain, did you say? The fine corn will soon be ripe, and I cannot go out. I cannot go to my field, for I am in chains."

The man threw himself back groaning on his bed. Eveli wanted to go. "Wait just a minute, just one minute," he asked. "Were you up on the mountain? How does the corn look? Is it already yellow? Oh, if I could see the ears!"

"Yes, I think it is already yellow in many places," said Eveli, "but I didn't notice it carefully, because I was only looking at the flowers; but to-morrow I will look at it specially, and then I will tell you."

"You are a good child; yes, come again and bring me the news," begged the sick man, "and will you bring me a corn-flower, too, again, please?"

Eveli promised, and then as she went back through the ward to leave them, the sick men all held out their hands to her and thanked her, and



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all begged her to come back again. Eveli was so filled with happiness and such great amazement, too, that she followed the sister as if in a dream. Never had she imagined that a man would thank her for a flower, and could take delight in it, and what gratitude and joy she had seen and heard from these beds of sickness! And that she could give this joy was an incomprehensible happiness for Eveli.

Then she came back again to Beni's room. He was sitting bolstered up with pillows, erect and comfortable in his bed as he had never been before, sitting in his wooden chair. Over the pretty coverlet was laid a flat wooden board like a table, which was fastened to both sides of the bed. On this lay a lovely new slate and pencil beside it.

"See, see!" said Beni, beaming with joy; "Sister Marie brought me that, and she will allow you to come to me every day at two o'clock, and teach me and sing to me, and tell me stories, as you did at home. I have told her all about it."

Eveli was so overcome at this new good-fortune that she could not say a word, but with inexpressible satisfaction looked first at the fine

slate and then immediately at Beni, who was sitting so comfortably and fresh and clean in his bed. Eveli felt as if she must sing and shout aloud for joy. Beni said they might begin to study at once, for Eveli would have to show him what she had learned in school for five days. But then his nurse, Sister Marie, who was always near by in the room, came along and said to-day was Sunday, when no one studied. The children had so many days before them when they could continue their studies, it would be better to-day if Eveli would sing her songs, about which Beni had told her. The children were content with this, and Eveli began in the joy of her heart to sing her songs so blithely and gladly it was like a little jubilant lark soaring heavenwards and singing his songs above the corn-fields and all the blue and red flowers blooming there. Beni could not have enough of it, for Eveli had never sung like this before. As soon as one song was ended he would say:

“Just one more, and then one more, and don’t stop yet!” And Eveli went on singing with her clear voice until at last she said: “Now I don’t know any more.”

Without Eveli's seeing her, the sister had opened wide both doors to the adjoining wards. Then the pale woman lying nearest the door exclaimed: "This has been a beautiful Sunday! Bring her to us again!"

And other weak voices listening to Eveli said: "Sing once in here for us."

But then the sister came out and said it was time for Eveli to leave the hospital, but tomorrow and every day at this time she might come again, for she could see how all the sick people were looking forward to it with delight.

Eveli could not climb the mountain swiftly enough to tell her mother about all the wonderful occurrences which she had experienced in the hospital. Now she had a little time to listen; on Sunday evening there always came a time when her mother went around the house or stood in front of it in the vegetable garden by the gilliflowers without hurrying all her footsteps as on work-days. Standing here in the vegetable garden, she listened silently to Eveli while she told with unusual vivacity about her experiences in the hospital, about Beni and his splendid bed and the firm pillows against which he could lean

his weak back and be supported so finely. And as she pictured the other patients and their suffering faces, and then the delight they had shown at the sight of the flowers, there shot into Eveli's eyes such a wonderful gleam of love and sympathy that her mother looked at the child in astonishment. She had never seen her like this before.

"To-morrow you must go and tell the grandmother all about it; it will make her happy," said her mother.

Eveli had well understood that her flowers had brought before the patients' eyes all the beautiful meadows and corn-fields, and on that account they had been so unusually delighted. So on the following day, although she had picked just as large a bunch of the corn-flowers as the day before, she gathered a quantity of the spicy-smelling thyme plants and placed them in her apron, for she could no longer clasp the bouquet, together with one single long stalk with a full ear of corn on it. Eveli knew very well that one ought not to pull off the ears of corn, but she thought she might carry one single one to a sick man. The sweet-smelling thyme she thought

would bring to the shut-in invalids' eyes all the green hedges and sunny mountain slopes where it grew.

So Eveli came quite laden down into the hospital. The sister wanted to take her directly to Beni, but to her surprise she requested to go to the men's ward first. Here she went through the entire long ward to the last bed; there by the shaggy-looking bearded man she stood still.

"Here is an ear from the big corn-fields in Mittelberg," said Eveli. "Here you can see how beautiful and yellow they are, and in the sunshine they are quite golden."

The man seized the stalk with a trembling hand, and looked at the ear all around. The grains were firm and perfect; they only needed a little time before they would be fully ripe.

"Oh, how beautiful it is, a whole field of such ears. To see that!" said the sick man, groaning. "Did you say from the big corn-field in Mittelberg? Is it the one where the big oak stands in the middle, or on the other side where the lightning tore up the pear-tree?"

"From the field where the big oak stands, I took the ear," said Eveli.

“It is from mine. So that is the way it looks, and I must lie here and cannot go out. Oh, my beautiful corn! my beautiful corn!”

Tears now stood in the eyes of the man who looked so wild. This went so to Eveli's heart that hers, too, filled with tears in a moment.

“Perhaps you will soon be well and can go out again,” she said, trying to console him.

“You wish me well, that I see,” said the man wiping his eyes. “Come, sit down a little on the chair by my bed. Your flowers smell so good to-day. It seems like being up on the mountain. Have you thyme in your apron?”

Eveli said she had, and opened her closely packed little apron. The strong odor floated through the room. Eveli heard how here and there a loud “Ah!” sounded, as if it were a great refreshment to one and another.

In the next bed lay a young man, almost as young as Hans, but as thin and white as if he had never been in the sunshine. He quickly sat up in his bed and drew in long breaths of the fragrance.

“It smells like that at home in the garden,” he said. “Ah, how long it is since I have seen it!



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It brings it all before my eyes, the wall where the thyme climbs up and the rushing brook behind under the alders."

The sick man turned away and buried his face in his pillow. Eveli rose and quickly laid a little bunch of thyme on his bed, then was going away, but the old man cried out:

"No, no! not yet. Come, sit down again. I want to say something more to you."

Eveli obeyed.

"They say you sang beautiful songs in the other ward yesterday; sing one for us, too; we should like to hear it."

"Yes, we should like to hear it, too," said another patient; and Eveli began to sing the song about "Recovery." She thought perhaps that would please the old man the best.

"But to-morrow again, please, another song then, will you?" he asked; "and then another ear of corn, but not for a couple of days and not too much. And whose little girl are you that you come past Mittelberg?"

"The nettle-farmer's in the Forest," answered Eveli.

The sick man collapsed as if he had received a blow.

“That is not true!” he cried, his voice trembling with anger. “You don’t belong to him! Perhaps you are staying with him, but you must belong to other people.”

“Only to mother,” said Eveli, frightened.

The sick man looked at Eveli piercingly. “You do not look one bit like him,” he then said in a calmer voice. “Perhaps you are really like your mother. You must not be afraid of me; I will not hurt you. Come again, will you?”

Eveli promised that she would, quickly laid her flowers on all the beds and went now to Beni.

It had grown somewhat late. Beni had been looking towards the door for a long time to see if Eveli was not coming in. But when she told him what had detained her, he was quite satisfied and said he would willingly wait every day until she could leave the patients, for Beni knew about suffering and would gladly give pleasure to every one who had to suffer. He was happy, too, and had so much to tell Eveli. She must know how often Sister Marie came to his bed and showed him how to make new strokes, and

even whole letters, and had promised him an A-B-C book. Then it might really be that he could get ahead a little faster even than Eveli herself, he had so much time to study. He looked expectantly at his teacher.

At this news Eveli showed such great delight, and from her heart, that Beni dared express his real joy over it, for he had silently worried lest Eveli would be a little troubled if he went ahead of her. But Eveli felt nothing but the greatest delight when Beni read like a pupil in the sixth class.

When Eveli to-day left the hospital she ran to her cousin's house. Her mother had told her the day before that she must go to her grandmother, and she herself wanted to go for she must tell her everything. If only she should find her alone!

Sure enough, she was sitting quite alone in the living-room at her spinning-wheel.

"Grandmother," she exclaimed as she came through the door, "it has already happened, it is already there!"

"What? what?" asked her grandmother in astonishment.

“The blessing, you know—the blessing, which lies under the burden, that the dear Lord sent us,” stated Eveli eagerly. “You know you said it was always lying under hard things to bear, although we might not see it right away, but at last it would appear, and with us it has appeared so soon!”

And Eveli began to tell the grandmother all about the blessing which had come to her herself, and first of all to Beni through the occurrence which had made them both so sad that they thought they never could be happy again. The grandmother was so delighted she could no longer spin, but could only listen and say again and again:

“Have you thanked the dear Lord? Don’t forget to thank Him, Eveli!”

And when she had heard everything, and had rejoiced with Eveli about it all, she said:

“You see, Eveli, when something hard comes to you again, and it will come many times, then think that the dear Lord has surely laid a blessing in it, but it will not always appear so soon as has happened this time nor always in such a way, for often it is a blessing which you cannot

see at all; it may come entirely hidden from you, so that you never know when it is already there. You must never forget this, Eveli; then you can always be a little comforted, if trouble comes to you, and can think even if it is hard, I surely know that the dear Lord has in mind something good for me."

Eveli thought immediately that she would never, never forget this as long as she lived.

But the grandmother said it would not be so easy as she thought now, since she saw the blessing so plainly before her eyes. It was the same with other people, too. Whenever new trouble arises they see only that, and because of their sorrow no longer think how the dear Lord has meant it for us and always means it.

## V

### THE NETTLE-FARMER'S SURPRISE

EVERY day in the beautiful vacation time Eveli came down to the hospital with a new bunch of flowers, and every day the patients looked forward to her appearance, so that one could see she

brought every one something that did them good. Above all, the old man in the corner awaited the child's coming with the greatest impatience and longing. As the time drew near he would call the nursing sister to him again and again and ask: "Has the child come yet?" and if Eveli was there, she had to sit down by him at once and it would be a good while before she could come away. When he would beg her not to leave him as he had nobody else in all the world to come to him and trouble about him, then Eveli would always sit with him longer and do everything he wished, and he said she helped him to forget his pain. Not only did Eveli have to sing him a few songs every day, he had now found out that she knew how to tell pleasant stories. Eveli could never tell him enough stories, which she had heard from her teacher, and also about all the old events her grandmother had told her.

When the last week of vacation came to an end, he inquired of Eveli what would happen now, whether in spite of school she would be able to come to the hospital every day. She thought she would always come on the two afternoons



when there was no school and also on Sunday; on the other days she could only come for a short visit, because it would usually be too late for her to go up the mountain alone.

Then she had to promise the sick man to come to his bed every time when she was there for a short while, and on free days always to stay longer with him. Eveli was heartily glad to promise everything; she knew no joy so great as this, to be desired by somebody and to be able to do him good.

On the last day of vacation the sick man had asked Eveli for all the songs he liked to hear her sing, and Eveli had had to stay with him still longer and tell him how it looked in the fields and meadows and on the trees on the whole mountain, and especially about the fields on the middle-farm. When at last Eveli had to go, the sick man with difficulty drew a paper from under his pillow and said:

“There, don’t lose it. Take it to your father.”

Eveli placed it in her pocket, and then ran to Beni in order to make a farewell visit to him. But it was no sad farewell; the children had no separation before them. Friendly Sister Marie

had given Eveli permission to come to the hospital as often as she had time. There would be three entire afternoons in the week and many hours on other days, as Eveli hoped. Besides, Beni knew that he would no longer be so alone as formerly during school hours, Sister Marie was so kind to him. He did not dare to say how many letters of the alphabet, through her help, he could now make more than Eveli; he concealed his wealth like the most precious treasure. He surely hoped that Eveli would gradually acquire the same treasure now that school was beginning again.

Eveli hurried home. But she had had so little intercourse in her life with her father that she was afraid to give him the paper herself. She quickly sought her mother and told her what the man had given her, and asked her to hand it to her father. Her mother unfolded the paper and read what was written in it. Then she folded it up again.

“No, Eveli, you must give that to your father yourself,” she said; “he is just coming in.”

Then she went into the kitchen. Eveli stood anxiously with the paper in her hand when her

father came in. Then she held out the note to him, and said:

“The sick man told me to give you this.”

“What sick man? What is this nonsense?” growled her father.

“I don’t know,” answered Eveli still offering him the crumpled paper.

Then her father took it. He unfolded it. It was written over inside. The writing was large enough so he could easily read what it said. He read:

TO THE NETTLE-FARMER:

You can have the piece of land to-day, if you like. You can thank your child, not me. She has done me good. I am surprised that you have such a child.

You can have the land at the first price that I valued it at. I will not make any profit from you, on account of the child.

RALL, THE MIDDLE-FARMER.

The father looked over the letter at his child, as if he had never seen her before. He had really noticed her very little. One could see that he did not know where he was. He read the letter over again from beginning to end. At this moment the brothers also came in to supper. As they had been quarrelling they were both full

of anger, and Heini, who now threw open the door and came in noisily first, actually almost fell over Eveli, for she was in a very unusual place by the door, as she was still standing in front of her father. She thought she ought to wait for an answer.

“Can’t you ever keep out of the way!” screamed Heini, “you good-for-nothing ——”

Then their father struck such a frightful blow on the table with his fist that everything shook and the big boys cowered.

“If I ever one single time hear such a word from either of you two, I will show you who is master, so that you will think about it,” he thundered. “Now you know it!”

The boys looked at each other in amazement. Neither of them could understand how their father’s anger could have turned to the other side.

On the following evening, when the nettle-farmer had had time to realize his good fortune and also time to talk, for it was Sunday, he told his wife and his sons about the offer the middle-farmer had made him, but he did not bring out the letter. He intended to take the matter in

hand without any delay, for a man who did business in such an inexplicable way might suddenly change his mind over night. Something else the nettle-farmer had also in mind. The child, who had worked this change in the middle-farmer's decision, which he could hardly understand, deserved a reward; she must have it. When the nettle-farmer considered what he had offered for the land and what he would get it for now, he could afford to give a good reward without noticeably affecting the profit he would make. He thought the matter over for a day.

When Monday evening came, and he was entering the living-room, he called to the child that he had something to talk with her about. Eveli came timidly out of the kitchen, where she was happily telling her mother about the new school-day and her noonday visit to her grandmother. Cousin Hans had kept his word well; as soon as one of his brothers or sisters began to tease Eveli a little, he fell upon them in such a way that all the others had to stop laughing and give up teasing. So from now on she could go to her cousins' house without any fear, for Hans would always protect her.

“I have something to say to you,” said her father, when Eveli stood in front of him; “you did a good thing, although I don’t know how, but you deserve a reward. Tell me what you would like most. You can have it.”

Eveli kept silent.

“Tell me what you would like. You needn’t be afraid,” said her father encouragingly. “I don’t know what thing it would be. You have probably seen something down at your aunt’s that would please you.”

Eveli was still silent.

“Well, what is it? Can’t you make up your mind?” asked her father, “or don’t you wish for anything?”

“I do wish for something,” said Eveli timidly.

“Well, speak it out. I have promised you that you shall have it. Tell what it is,” commanded her father.

“I should like to stay always in the hospital, like Sister Marie, and do everything for the patients to make them well,” was the soft answer.

If Eveli had suddenly spoken Latin her father would not have regarded her with such amazement as he did now. He did not know either



about the hospital, or of Eveli's visits there, nor really anything about her life.

"I don't know what you are saying," finally he replied slowly, "about the hospital and what goes on there, only the pastor knows. Now wish for something that can be done."

"Ask the pastor," said Eveli.

Her father looked as if he had the same thought as the middle-farmer, as if he did not understand how this could be his child, that would not open her hand to take the best thing when the very best was offered her. But this firm persistency in the matter struck him as a family trait.

"She has become my best boy," he said to himself.

"All right, then; a promise is a promise," he said aloud, and let Eveli go.

On Sunday he dressed in his church clothes early, for he was going to church, he told his wife, who was very much surprised, for her husband usually went there only on high festivals. But the nettle-farmer would not go to call on the pastor without going to church.

As soon as he came home he told his wife that

after the service he had been to the pastor's, who had told him things he could hardly believe. He knew Eveli very well, and the pastor's wife knew especially about her. She went often to the hospital, and had frequently seen the child there, and had noticed with surprise how much good she did to the patients. He had then told the pastor Eveli's wish, whereupon he had answered that they should tell the child that when she came to receive his instruction he would talk with her about the matter, and when she was confirmed she would learn that he had not forgotten her wish.

Until then the child should be allowed to go to the hospital as before; it was a comfort and delight to everybody. The pastor had talked about the child as of something unusual, to be taken great care of. No one had thought of such a thing, but yet they must see that the child was treated right at home, and they must not allow the boys to be unkind to her.

"We have been calling her by an outrageous name. We shouldn't have done so," concluded the farmer a little regretfully.

"Eveli has a good name, that is sure," said his

wife, "and I will take good care of the child. I am delighted that our pastor has taken her under his protection and shown you that she is worth the care."

Eveli's mother told her what the pastor had said, and that her wish would be fulfilled as soon as it was time.

Autumn had now come. Eveli had only one hour to spend in the hospital, for she could not go home from school after dark. So often she did not know how to find time for Beni and the teaching which she had begun. The middle-farmer had made her promise to come to him every day, so she always went to him first and then could hardly get away from him. When she told the grandmother how emaciated the man looked, and how glad he was to hear her songs, she always tried to recall new stories about people she had known, who after penitence and sorrow for all the earthly wrongs they had done and suffered, had craved God's pardon, and had finally gone happily and peacefully to another life. Then Eveli would tell it all to the middle-farmer, who always liked to listen to the grandmother's stories.

When Eveli came in to Beni one evening and supposed that this time he would surely be cross because she came so late, Beni looked up at her with beaming eyes and exclaimed at once:

“Come, Eveli; to-day I have something to tell you; you can’t think what it is! If only it doesn’t make you feel badly.”

“Anything that makes you so happy, surely wouldn’t make me feel badly,” asserted Eveli.

“Only think, think, Eveli; I can really read. I can read a story and understand it all,” and Beni drew his little book from under his pillow, and showed Eveli a story which he had read through.

“Perhaps you will be able to do the same soon,” he added consolingly. “You don’t know at all how it is when you can read all alone, what is in the whole book, and then in all—all the books people have.”

Then Eveli broke forth in such rejoicing over this news that Beni could see she needed no consolation because she had not gone so far. Eveli rejoiced that Beni now had such a resource when she could not come so often and never more would find the time long and be sad when he had

to be alone. But Beni had not imparted all his good-fortune. To-day Sister Marie had told him that he would not have to go home all winter long, which he had feared above all. The prospect of the long tedious days in the dark living-room or the cold bedroom had often filled him with dread.

“ Oh, just think, Eveli,” he exclaimed in beaming delight, “ to stay here the whole winter, where it is bright and warm, and sit in this lovely bed, and never more shiver in the dark, and fall off from the chair, when it hurt me so! And I can always read stories, for Sister Marie will bring me another book when I have finished this one; she has told me so. There are really not many people so well-off as I, don’t you think so, Eveli?”

Eveli was so immensely delighted at this piece of glad news that she could only keep saying the same thing again and again, and exclaiming for joy over it.

Now Beni would remain under kind Sister Marie’s care, and in the place where she liked best to come, and she could always visit him every day. The children both thought such joy as they

felt to-day was the greatest good-fortune they could have.

On the day when the first snow fell the middle-farmer closed his eyes. His last word had been a word of blessing which he called after Eveli. A few hours before she had sat a long while by his bed. He had asked: "Sing to me 'Short is the night,' " and while Eveli did so, he seized her hand and held it closer and closer, as if the little hand was an anchor for him in the dark billows surging around him.

The hints which the doctor gave Sister Marie about Beni's condition made it easy for her to obtain what she herself wished, that Beni should never have to leave the hospital. It was the fulfilment of his only wish, and made him one of the happiest people for the short time which he had to spend in this life. In his comfortable bed with the little table over it, on which his book lay constantly, he sat with a contented smile, sometimes talking with friendly Sister Marie, then buried for a long time in his book, until the moment when Eveli appeared, and then the liveliest conversation on both sides crowded out everything else.



Every day in the new summer Eveli appeared again with her big bunch of flowers, to the delight and refreshment of everybody. But the pastor does not forget Eveli's wish, which will be realized as soon as the right time comes for it.











